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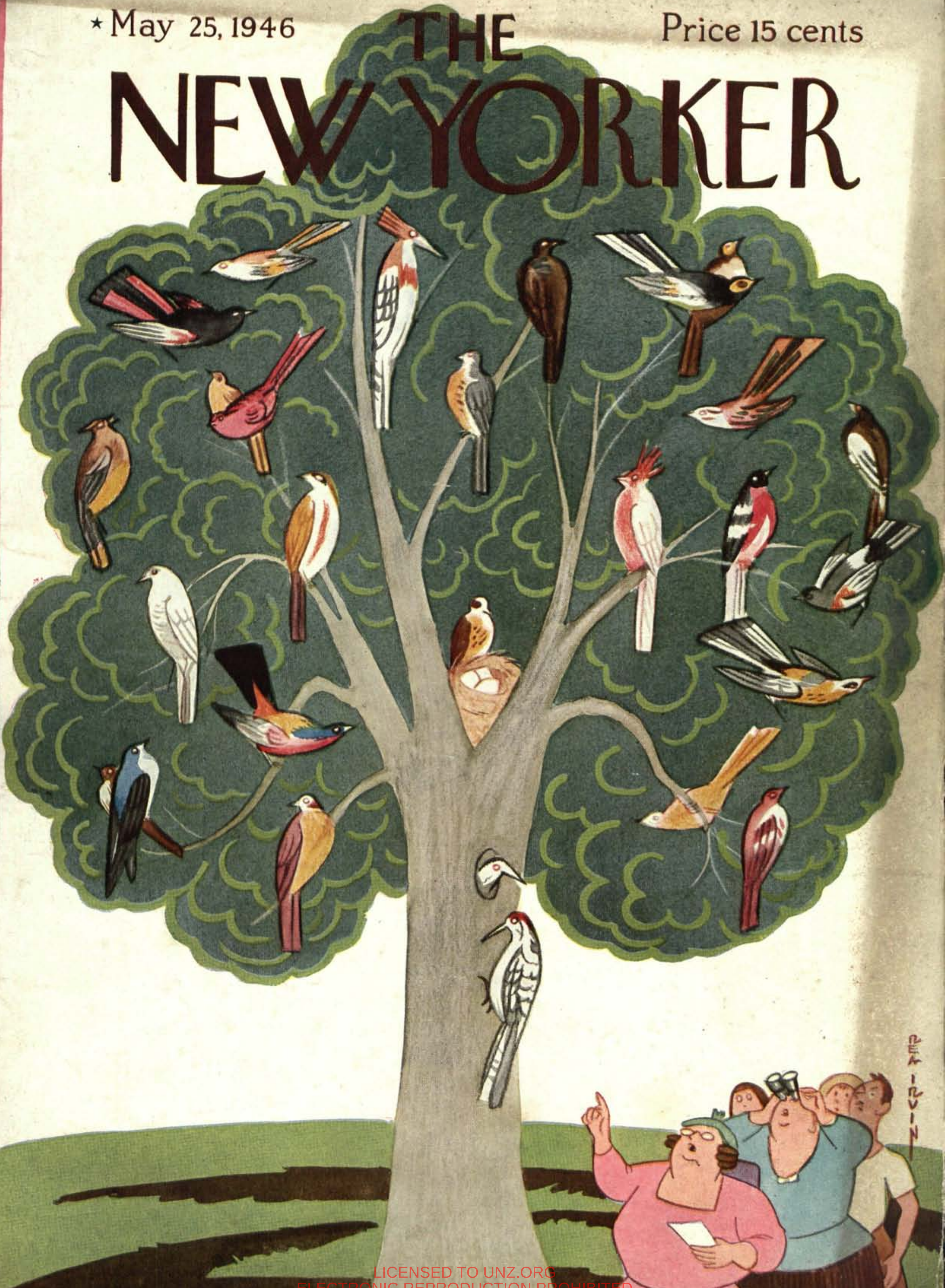
THE NEW YORKER



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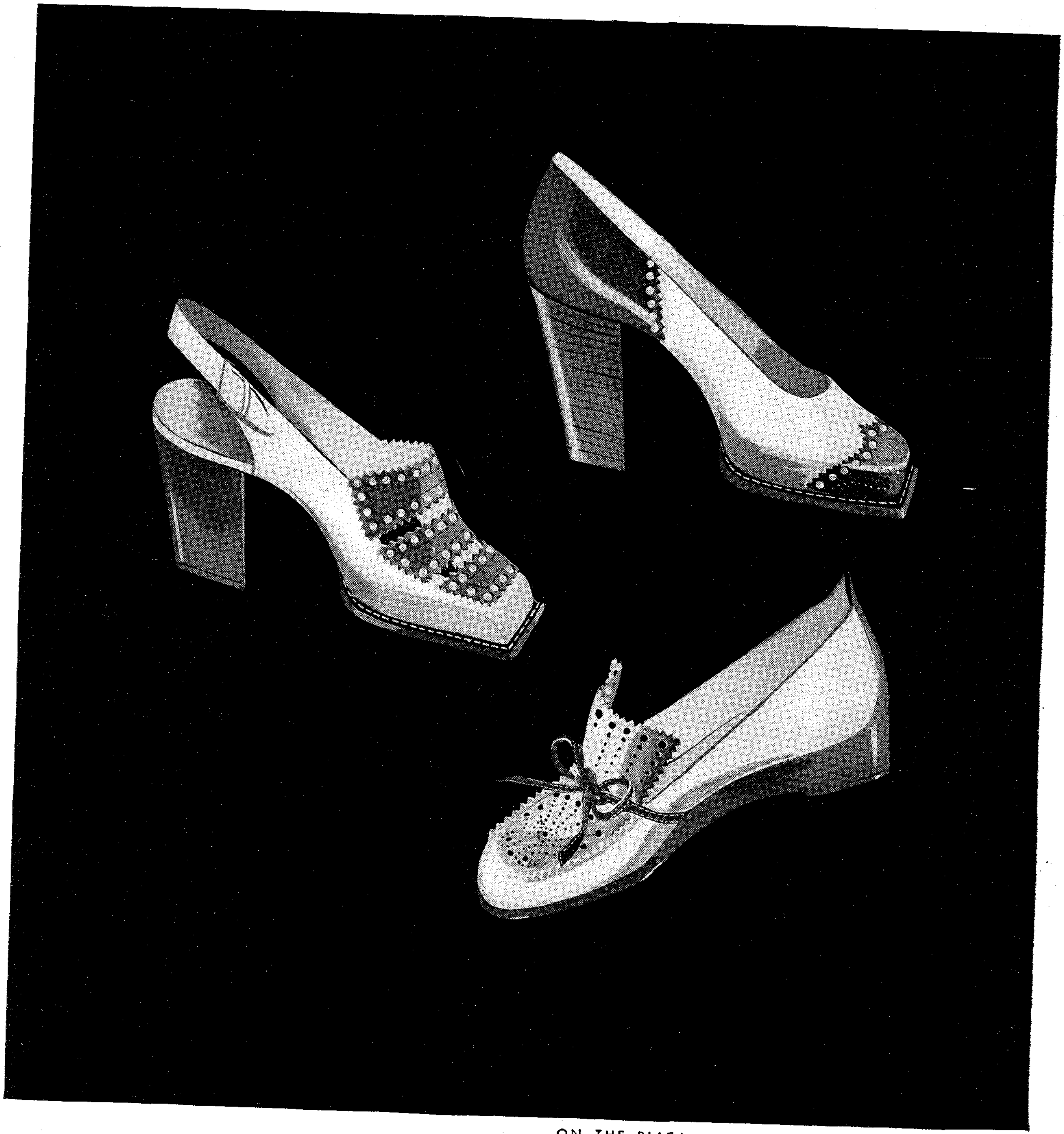
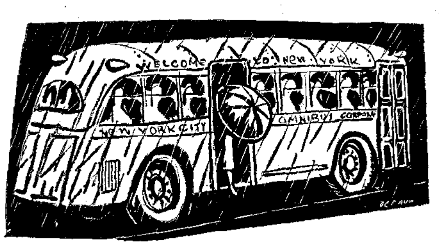


ON THE PLAZA • NEW YORK 19

BERGDORF GOODMAN

5TH AVENUE AT 58TH STREET

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

THIS LISTING COVERS THE TEN DAYS
FROM THURSDAY, MAY 23,
THROUGH SATURDAY, JUNE 1.

THE THEATRE

(Next week, most theatres, as indicated below, will rearrange their matinée schedules to include a performance on Memorial Day. There may be still further changes, so you'd do well to check with the newspapers before making plans. . . . E. and W. mean East and West of Broadway.)

PLAYS

ANNA LUCASTA—Philip Yordan's stirring play about a Negro prostitute, now in its second year, is something you shouldn't miss. Harry Wagstaff Gribble is the director. (Mansfield, 47, W. CI 6-9056. Nightly, except Mon., at 8:40. Mats. Sat. and Sun. at 2:40.)

BORN YESTERDAY—Garson Kanin's very funny and expert comedy about a big-time crook and the little girl who ruins his racket. Judy Holliday is superb as a current Lorelei Lee, and Paul Douglas makes a most convincing malefactor. (Lyceum, 45, E. CH 4-4256. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:40. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:40; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:40.)

DEAR RUTH—A comedy about a girl and a soldier that is a good deal like a lot of others, but quite agreeable just the same. Second year. (Henry Miller, 43, E. BR 9-3970. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:40. Mats. Thurs. and Sat. at 2:40.)

DEEP ARE THE ROOTS—The authors of "Tomorrow the World" have taken up the Negro problem, but the result, while a satisfactory melodrama, doesn't contribute much to its solution. Barbara Bel Geddes gives a notably simple and touching performance. (Fulton, 46, W. CI 6-6380. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:40. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:40; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:40.)

DREAM GIRL—Elmer Rice describes the secret and public life of a rather dreamy young woman in a great many scenes, of which about half are extremely amusing. Haila Stoddard has the principal role. Produced by the Playwrights' Company. (Coronet, 49, W. CI 6-8870. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:35. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:35.)

THE GLASS MENAGERIE—A tremendously moving story about a mother who tries to bully her whole family into happiness. Beautifully played by a cast consisting of Laurette Taylor, Eddie Dowling, Julie Haydon, and Anthony Ross. Winner of the 1945 Drama Critics' Award. (Playhouse, 48, E. BR 9-3565. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:40. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:40.)

HARVEY—About a man who takes up with a six-foot rabbit, and one of the most engaging fantasies in years. Frank Fay and Josephine Hull are magnificent in this winner of the 1945 Pulitzer Prize. (48th Street, 48, E. BR 9-4566. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:40. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:40.)

I REMEMBER MAMA—John van Druten's appealing and humorous adaptation of the Kathryn Forbes novel about a Norwegian family in San Francisco. Mady Christians and Oscar Homolka head a cast which also includes Joan Tetzel. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II are the fortunate producers. Second year. (Music Box, 45, W. CI 6-4636. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:35. Mats. Thurs. and Sat. at 2:35.)

LIFE WITH FATHER—This high-spirited comedy, based on the late Clarence Day's stories, is in its seventh year. Wallis Clark and Lily Cahill play Father and Mother. (Bijou, 45, W. CO 5-8215. Nightly, except Mon., at 8:40. Mats. Sat. and Sun. at 2:40.)

THE MAGNIFICENT YANKEE—Emmet Lavery's play covers thirty fairly undramatic years in the life of Mr. Justice Holmes, but it is a conscientious effort and Louis Calhern's portrayal is really admirable. With Dorothy Gish. (Royale, 45, W. CI 5-5760. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:30; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:30.)

O MISTRESS MINE—The performances of the Lunts in this play by Terence Rattigan would be an important event in any season. The plot has to do with one of those fashionable British adulteries, but you can just forget about it. (Empire, B'way at 40. PE 6-9540. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Thurs. and Sat. at 2:30.)

OLD VIC THEATRE COMPANY—The double bill composed of "Oedipus" and "The Critic" is still to be performed at this writing, but Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, and their associates have done "Henry IV" and "Uncle Vanya" and neither seems altogether a happy choice, though the acting is often impressive. The schedule of performances for this week and next is: "Henry IV, Part I," Thurs. and Fri. Eves., May 23-24, Sat. Mat., May 25, and Mon., Thurs., and Sat. Eves., May 27, 30, and June 1; "Henry IV, Part II," Sat. Eve., May 25; "Oedipus" and "The Critic," Tues., Wed., and Fri. Eves., May 28, 29, and 31, and Wed. Mat., May 29. (Century, 7 Ave. at 59. CI 7-3121. Eve. performances at 8:30. Mats. at 2:30.)

ON WHITMAN AVENUE—Maxine Wood has an important theme in this play about a Negro family which moves into a white neighborhood, but her treatment is by no means sure enough. Canada Lee heads the cast. (Cort, 48, E. BR 9-0046. Nightly, except Mon., at 8:40. Mats. Sat. and Sun. at 2:40.)

PYGMALION—Gertrude Lawrence is charming and sympathetic in this revival produced by Theatre Incorporated. With Melville Cooper and Cecil Humphreys. (Ethel Barrymore, 47, W. CI 6-0390. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:30. Closes Sat., June 1.)

STATE OF THE UNION—A fine, funny play, by Russel Crouse and Howard Lindsay, concerning a man who has to choose between his conscience and the Presidency. Ralph Bellamy, Ruth Hussey, Minor Watson, Margalo Gillmore, and Myron McCormick head an excellent cast. Winner of the 1946 Pulitzer Prize. (Hudson, 44, E. BR 9-5641. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:35. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:35; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:35.)

SWAN SONG—You might call this Hecht-MacArthur play about dark doings in the musical set a psychological thriller, but you'd be pretty optimistic. Twelve-year-old Jacqueline Horner, however, plays the piano remarkably well. (Booth, 45, W. CI 6-5969. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:40. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:40; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:40.)

THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE—John van Druten's light, expert play about a girl who entertains a sergeant on his weekend pass is in its third year. Martha Scott, John Beal, and Vicki Cummings are the whole cast. (Morosco, 45, W. CI 6-6230. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:35. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:35; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:35.)

WITH MUSIC

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN—Ethel Merman is an earsplitting delight in this saga of Little Sureshot. Irving Berlin wrote the excellent music and lyrics, Herbert and Dorothy Fields did the book, and the very competent cast includes Ray Middleton, Marty May, and Harry Bellaver. (Imperial, 45, W. CO 5-2412. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:30.)

ARE YOU WITH IT?—A musical comedy, centering around a carnival, that seems far too short on both humor and song. Joan Roberts, Johnny Downs, Lew Parker, and a rather stirring blonde called Dolores Gray do their best to ginger things up, but without much success. (Shubert, 44, W. CI 6-5990. Nightly, except Mon., at 8:30. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:30; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:30.)

BILLION DOLLAR BABY—A very engaging satire on the late twenties, when practically anything could happen, by the authors of "On the Town." Joan McCracken and Mitzi Green are extremely fetching as a couple of noisy girls of the period. (Alvin, 52, W. CI 5-6868. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:30; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:30.)

CALL ME MISTER—A lot of ex-G.I.s and their girls have put together the happiest military offering since "This Is the Army." Arnold Auerbach wrote the sketches, Harold Rome provided the songs, and the cast includes Betty Garrett, Jules Munshin, and Bill Callahan. (National, 41, W. PE 6-8220. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:35. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:35.)

CAROUSEL—A musical version of "Liliom" which is another triumph for Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Agnes de Mille arranged the dances, Jo Mielziner designed the sets, and Rouben Mamoulian is the director. A Theatre Guild production, now in its second year. (Majestic, 44, W. CI 6-0730. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Thurs. and Sat. at 2:30.)

LUTE SONG—An old Chinese legend decked out in Robert Edmond Jones' most spectacular trappings and assisted by Mary Martin's reliable charm. Big, beautiful, and perhaps a bore. (Plymouth, 45, W. CI 6-9156. Nightly, except Mon., at 8:30. Mats. Sat. and Sun. at 2:30.)

OKLAHOMA!—This splendid musical version of "Green Grow the Lilacs," contrived by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, is in its fourth year. (St. James, 44, W. LA 4-4664. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Thurs. and Sat. at 2:30.)

THE RED MILL—A revival of the great Montgomery and Stone vehicle of 1906. Victor Herbert's score is still enchanting and Eddie Foy, Jr., is a highly satisfactory comic, but the total effect is disappointing. With Dorothy Stone, Jack Whiting, and Odette Myrtil. (46th Street, 46, W. CI 6-6075. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:40. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:40; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:40.)

ST. LOUIS WOMAN—Though it is slightly overburdened with plot, this all-colored musical is generally a treat. Harold Arlen's music and Lemuel Ayers' costumes and sets are both first-rate, and the cast, which includes Ruby Hill, Harold Nicholas, and Pearl Bailey, could hardly be better. (Martin Beck, 45, W. CI 6-6363. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:30; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:30.)

SHOW BOAT—Edna Ferber's little book turns up again, this time in a very fine revival with Carol Bruce, Kenneth Spencer, Ralph Dumke, Charles Fredericks, and Buddy Ebsen. The physical production is brilliant and the old songs sound lovelier than ever. (Ziegfeld, Ave. of Americas at 54. CI 5-5200. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:30.)

SONG OF NORWAY—The life of Grieg, set to arrangements of some of his own music. Good-looking and agreeable to listen to, but the story is moderately foolish. With Irra Petina, Lawrence Brooks, and Robert Shafer. Second year. (Broadway, B'way at 53. CI 7-2887. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:30.)

THREE TO MAKE READY—Ray Bolger does his nimble and comic best, but even he is not quite enough to save this successor to "One for the Money" and "Two for the Show." The cast includes Brenda Forbes, Jane Deering, and Rose Inghram. (Broadhurst, 44, W. CI 6-6699. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:40. Mats. Wed., except May 29, and Sat. at 2:40; special Mat. Thurs., May 30, at 2:40.)

OPENINGS

(There are often last-minute changes, so you'd better verify the dates and curtain times.)

AROUND THE WORLD—A new musical by Cole Porter and Orson Welles, produced and directed by Mr. Welles, with settings by Robert Davison. The cast is headed by Arthur Margetson, Mary Healy, and Julie Warren. Opens Fri., May 31. (Adelphi,

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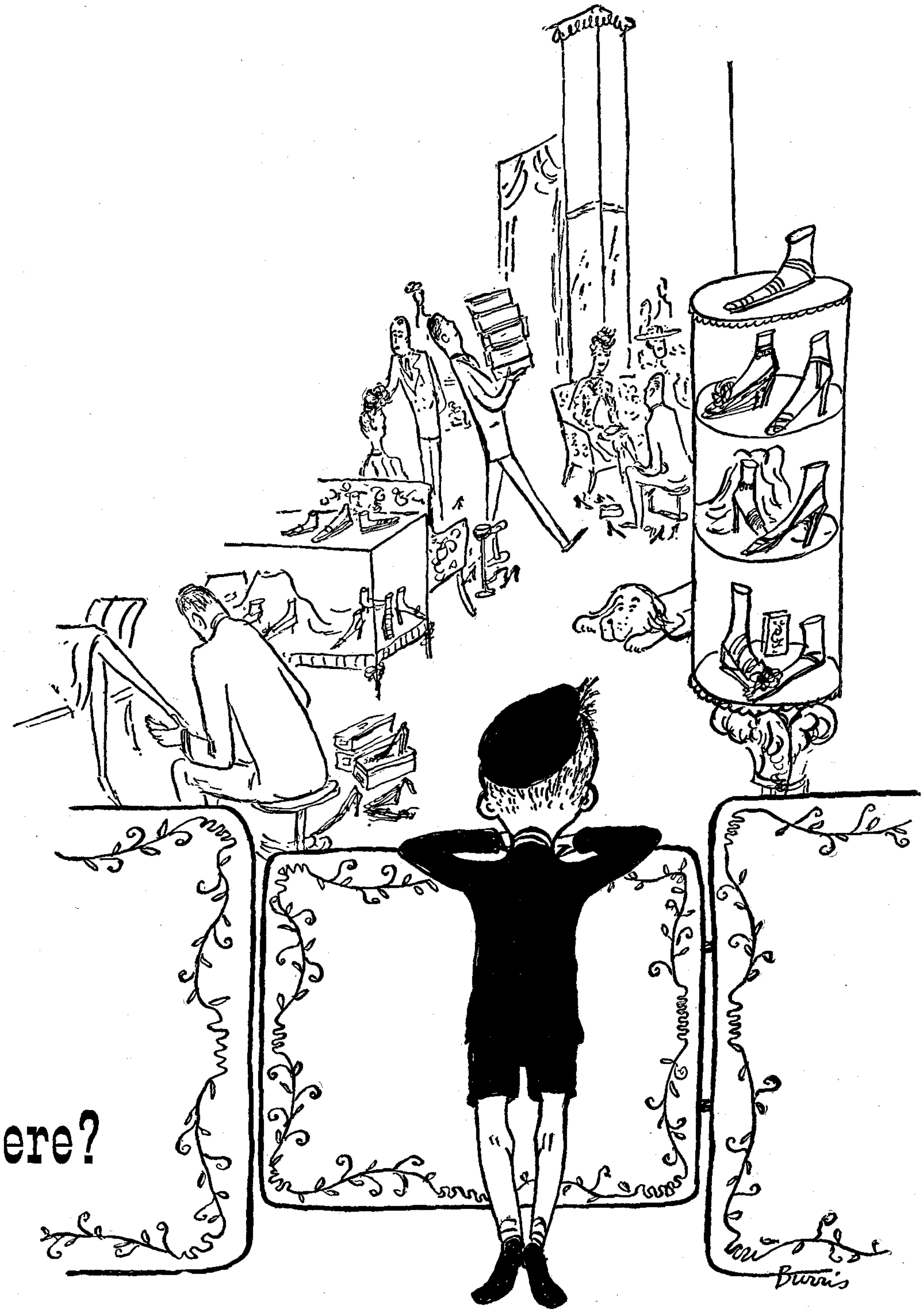


Is my
mother
in there?

YES SONNY, that's mommy, third from this end—the lady with the pretty feet. As usual, S.F.A.'s Shoe Salon is doing right well by them. Those pixie handsewn Ficelles will make her feet positively faunlike while chasing you around the park. The bright little flat reptile affairs (snakes to you, boy) are for all summer long—with everything. As for that pair of gold Pagan Sandals—they're for evenings when mommy would just as soon forget she's a mommy for a little while. Get away from those swinging doors son—here comes mommy and she's walking on air—all because of S.F.A.'s Shoe Salon.

—where else but at
SAKS FIFTH AVENUE at Rockefeller Center

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THIS LISTING COVERS THE TEN DAYS
FROM THURSDAY, MAY 23,
THROUGH SATURDAY, JUNE 1.

54, E. CI 6-5097. Nightly, except Sun., at 8:30. Mats. Wed. and Sat. at 2:30.)

MISCELLANY

Paul Draper and Josh White—In a joint dance and folk-song recital. (Central High School of Needle Trades, 225 W. 24. Sun. Eve., May 26, at 8:30; for tickets call EN 2-4197.)

Tuskegee Institute Choir—Katherine Dunham, Bill Robinson, Kenneth Spencer, and others will appear as soloists with this venerable group. (New York City Center, 131 W. 55. CI 6-8989. Mon. Eve., May 27, at 8:30.)

CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT

American Youth Orchestra—Dean Dixon conducting a special program, part of which is designed to teach young people, from four up, the fundamentals of music. (Hunter College Auditorium, Park at 68. Thurs. Aft., May 30, at 2; for tickets call AU 3-2681.)

Notes—The Trans-Lux 85th Street Theatre, Madison at 85, BU 8-3180, shows cartoon films and short features of interest to youngsters on Saturday mornings at 11. . . . And, of course, there's always the Children's Zoo at Bronx Park.

DANCE RECITALS

Charles Weidman—Assisted by Peter Hamilton, Nadine Gae, and his company. (Studio Theatre, 108 W. 16. CH 2-9819. Fri. and Wed. Eves., May 24, 29, and 31, at 8:45.)

Benefit—Martha Graham, Paul Draper, Katherine Dunham, Jerome Robbins, and twelve other dancers in a program for the benefit of the American Society for Russian Relief. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. Sat. Eve., May 25, at 8:30; for tickets call WH 3-2460.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A listing of some places at which you'll find dance music and/or other entertainment. Several of them are closed or have fill-in entertainers on Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday, so you'd better phone ahead before starting out on those nights.)

DINNER, SUPPER, AND DANCING

Ambassador Garden, Park at 51 (WI 2-1000)—This cool, subterranean retreat has Jules Lande's gentlemanly orchestra.

Biltmore, Madison at 43 (MU 9-7920)—In the big but comfortable Bowman Room, there's Dick Stabile's orchestra and a dance team.

Café Society Uptown, 128 E. 58 (PL 5-9223)—Pat Flowers, one of the good hot pianists, in a show that's several paces behind him. Edmond Hall's band for dancing.

Embassy, 149 E. 57 (PL 3-8998)—Charles Trenet, lately imported from Paris, France, chirping merrily in a very gilded cage. José Curbelo's rumba band and Ralph Lane's orchestra for dancing.

Larue, 45 E. 58 (VO 5-6374)—A reasonably close approach to upper-bracket grandeur, greatly enhanced by the chipper music of Eddie Davis's and Gil Murray's orchestras.

Monte Carlo, Madison at 54 (PL 5-3400)—Big and rather beautiful, but with kind of a benzedrine atmosphere. Dick Gasparre's orchestra and a rumba band.

El Morocco, 154 E. 54 (EL 5-8769)—The corner drugstore for the platina set. Chauncey Gray's orchestra and Chiquito's rumba band.

Pierre, 5 Ave. at 61 (RE 4-5900)—Myrus, the talented mind reader, is in the baroque Cotillion Room, along with Stanley Melba's bouncy dance band and a dance team. A Melba trio plays for tea dancing daily in the Café Pierre and during dinner and supper.

Plaza, 5 Ave. at 58 (PL 3-1740)—Hildegarde is in full cry in the Persian Room at dinner and supper. The orchestras of Arthur Ravel and Mark Monte play for dancing.

St. Regis Roof, 5 Ave. at 55 (PL 3-4500)—One of our nicest vernal resorts, with Paul Sparr's and Theodora Brooks' orchestras for dancing.

Savoy-Plaza, 5 Ave. at 59 (VO 5-2600)—In the Café Lounge, handsome and sort of dressy, your conversation is set to sweet music by Cal Gilford and his orchestra, plus Clemente's marimba band. Tea dancing every afternoon.

Stork Club, 3 E. 53 (PL 3-1940)—A little world all its own, with some amazing tribal customs. Lester Lanin's orchestra and a rumba band play the appropriate music. Tea dancing daily to Joe Carroll's orchestra.

Waldorf-Astoria, Park at 49 (EL 5-3000)—Up on the Starlight Roof (stars by Consolidated Edison), Xavier Cugat's elaborate orchestra plays at both dinner and supper, with Mischa Borr's band helping out at the after-theatre hour. . . . Michael Zarin's orchestra is in the Flamingo Room.

SMALL AND CHEERFUL

Café Society Downtown, 2 Sheridan Sq. (CH 2-2737)—The very special songs of Josh White, accomplished piano playing by Cliff Jackson, boogie-woogie by Pete Johnson, and dance music by J. C. Heard's orchestra. . . . **Coq Rouge,** 65 E. 56 (PL 3-8887): a lively, bustling establishment with sprightly music by Dick Wilson's orchestra and Ralph Rotgers' rumba band. . . . **Drake,** 71 E. 56 (WI 2-0600): in the stylish little Drake Room, there's stylish nourishment to the accompaniment of soft and subtle piano—by Cy Walter at cocktails and supper, by Lester Crosley in between; no dancing. . . . **Madison,** Madison at 58 (VO 5-5000): Sonny Kendis's orchestra for dancing up to nine, and other agreeable entertainment thereafter, including a turn by Patricia Bright. . . . **Armando's,** 54 E. 55 (PL 3-0760): Jacques Thaler playing the piano, after nine-thirty, in this casual little alley; no dancing. . . . **1-2-3 Club,** 123 E. 54 (PL 3-9131): a darksome glade in which to listen to the rambling piano solos of Roger Stearns; no dancing. . . . **Casino Russe,** 157 W. 56 (CI 6-6116): you know, those old Russian torch-song-and-dance acts, but nicely done just the same; dance music by a gypsy orchestra. . . . **El Chico,** 80 Grove, at Sheridan Sq. (CH 2-4646): a very pleasant and un-Sheridan Square mixture of Latin atmosphere and Latin music. . . . **Village Vanguard,** 178 7 Ave. S., at 11 (CH 2-9355): a small cave inhabited by Don Frye (hot piano), Hank Duncan's trio (also hot, with Freddie Moore at the drums), and a cluster of newcomers (hot and cold), all of whom get under way fairly well along in the evening.

BIG AND BRASSY

Carnival, 8 Ave. at 51 (CI 6-4122): Milton Berle, or Absolutely Anything for a Laugh, plus a dizzying trapeze act by Elly Ardelty and lots of less interesting stuff, including dancing by the customers. . . . **Versailles,** 151 E. 50 (PL 8-0310): Carl Brisson and his Danish-pastry songs, along with Emil Petti's orchestra and a rumba band. On Wed., May 29, the decorative Evelyn Knight will take over from M. Brisson. . . . **Zanzibar,** B'way at 49 (CI 7-7380): about what you'd expect of B'way at 49, but helped somewhat by Maurice Rocco, the King Cole Trio, and Claude Hopkins' band. . . . **Copacabana,** 10 E. 60 (PL 8-1060): another one of those all too familiar Copacabana shows, this time headed by Jane Froman. Dance music by Ernie Holst's orchestra and Desi Arnaz's rumba band.

SUPPER CLUBS

(Entertainment but no dancing.)

Blue Angel, 152 E. 55 (PL 3-0626): an extensive, agreeable, and intelligent evening at the hands of Florence Desmond (through Sun., May 26), Eddie Mayehoff, Stuart Ross, and Rose Murphy. . . . **Spivy's Roof,** 139 E. 57 (EL 5-9215): Spivy's musings on the problems of fashionable life about town, Bart Howard's piano playing, Daphne Hellman's handiwork on the harp, and music by the Three Flames. . . . **Ruban Bleu,** 4 E. 56 (EL 5-9787): the earthy humor of Mervyn Nelson, which may have some appeal for permanent adolescents.

MOSTLY FOR MUSIC

(No dancing, unless otherwise indicated.)

Eddie Condon's, 47 W. 3 (GR 3-8736): a convenient combination of chophouse and hot-music hall, offering Wild Bill Davison, Dave Tough, Joe Dixon, and others of the same cut, often including Mr. Condon. In between, the patter of James P. Johnson's mighty fingers on the local Steinway. On Mondays, Bud Freeman, Joe Bushkin, and George Wettling have the freedom of the house. . . . **Stuyvesant Casino,** 140 2 Ave., at 9 (ST 9-9742): Bunk Johnson, showing how they played jazz in the *old* New Orleans; this time, unhappily, without the miraculous Baby Dodds at the drums. The place looks something like a warehouse loft, but there's room to dance. Closes Sat., June 1. . . . **Nick's,** 7 Ave. S. at 10 (CH 2-6683): Miff Mole, Muggsy Spanier, Pee Wee Russell, and their compatriots, working at what can truthfully be called full blast. . . . **400 Club,** 1 E. 43 (MU 2-3423): Benny Goodman and his latest orchestra playing for the uptown jitterbugs. . . . **Jimmy Ryan's,** 53 W. 52 (EL 5-9600): music by George Brunies (owner-operator of the nation's most clarion trombone) and confreres, including Tony Parenti on the clarinet. . . . **Onyx,** 57 W. 52 (EL 5-7835): J. C. Higginbotham and *his* trombone furnishing a thoroughly noisy evening, along with Red Allen's orchestra. . . . **Downbeat,** 66 W. 52 (EL 5-8773): Art Tatum's unique piano playing, and more mundane music by Tiny Grimes' band, which has Trummy Young as trombonist; dancing. . . . **Aquarium,** 711 7 Ave., at 47 (BR 9-8884): Gene Krupa and his orchestra sounding off in a big, brash bar-and-grill; dancing. . . . **Spotlite,** 56 W. 52 (EL 5-8148): Dizzy Gillespie's orchestra. . . . **Three Deuces,** 72 W. 52 (EL 5-9861): Eddie Heywood's orchestra entrancing its admirers.

MOSTLY FOR DANCING

Astor Roof, B'way at 44 (CO 6-6000): Alvino Rey's orchestra at work on this huge, crowded, but generally satisfactory rooftop. . . . **Commodore,** Lexington at 42 (MU 6-6000): Hal McIntyre's orchestra. . . . **Essex House,** 160 Central Pk. S. (CI 7-0300): Pancho's orchestra. . . . **Pennsylvania,** 7 Ave. at 33 (PE 6-5000): George Paxton's orchestra. . . . **Roosevelt,** Madison at 45 (MU 6-9200): Joe Reichman's orchestra.

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries will be closed on Memorial Day.)

Animals in Art—Paintings of leopards and other beasts, by various contemporary artists. (New York Circulating Library of Paintings, 51 E. 57. Weekdays 10:30 A.M. to 5 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.)

Benefit Show—Fifteen oils by Paul Ullman, who was killed in France in 1944, and a number of paintings by artists he admired—Breughel, Corot, Degas, Manet, and others—in a benefit for the Red Cross. (American British Art Center, 44 W. 56. Daily 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Sat., May 25.)

Yuli Blumberg—Strident Expressionist oils of ghetto life. (A.C.A., 63 E. 57. Daily 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through Sat., May 25.)

Robert Brackman—New oils. (Grand Central, 55 E. 57. Mon. through Fri., 9:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Tues., May 28.)

Georges Braque—Eleven paintings done between 1925 and 1939. (Rosenberg, 16 E. 57. Daily 9:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Sat., May 25.)

Currier & Ives—An exhibition of original paintings by the old firm's artists, and a number of prints. (Kennedy, 785 5 Ave., at 60. Weekdays 9:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.)

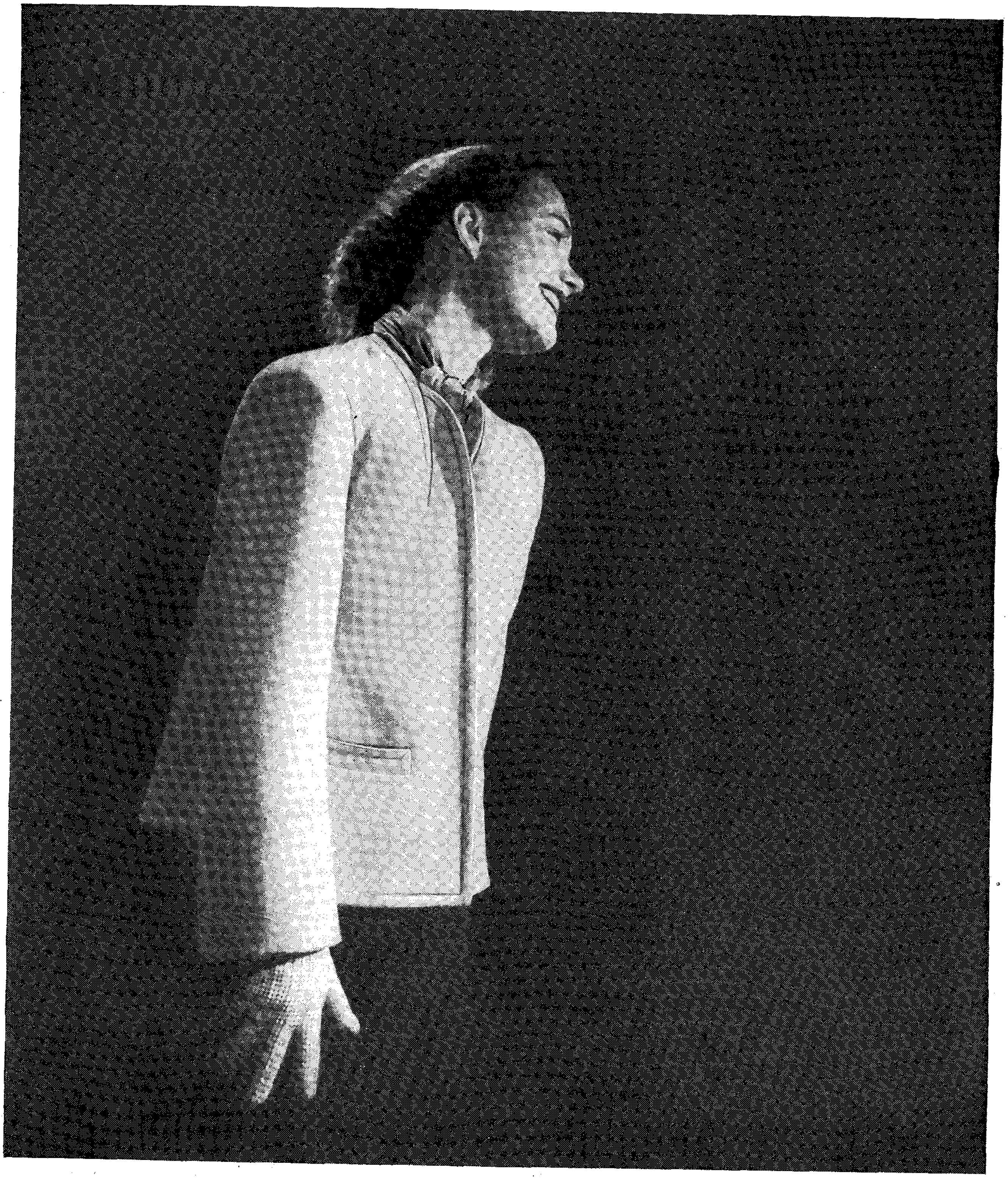
Arthur G. Dove—Eight new paintings, as well as some others done a few years ago. (An American Place, 509 Madison, at 53. Weekdays 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through June 12.)

Philip Evergood—An artist's progress, from 1939 to the present, in a fairly large retrospective. (A.C.A., 63 E. 57. Daily 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through Sat., May 25.)

French—At the **Matisse,** 41 E. 57: first sizable shipment of post-1939 French paintings, including recent canvases by such people as Matisse, Picasso, and Rouault, plus a couple by relative newcomers. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through June 8.) . . . **Niveau,** 63 E. 57: paintings by Braque, Chagall, Derain, and others. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Fri., May 31.) . . . **Wildenstein,** 19 E. 64: a loan exhibition of seventeenth-century French paintings, for the benefit of the Caen Library. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.)

Groups—At the **Bignou,** 32 E. 57: paintings by Soutine, Rouault, and other Frenchmen as well as work by the gallery's group. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.; through June 30.) . . . **Downtown,** 32 E. 51: oils by six members of the gallery who were recently discharged from the armed forces. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.) . . . **Feigl,** 601 Madison, at 57: mostly oils, but some water colors, too, by such Europeans as Soutine, Vlaminck, and Hofer. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through June 30.) . . . **Kootz,** 15 E. 57: paintings by seven moderns, all abstract in style. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to

Bonwit Teller New York and White Plains



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THIS LISTING COVERS THE TEN DAYS
FROM THURSDAY, MAY 23,
THROUGH SATURDAY, JUNE 1.

6 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.) . . . **LILIENFELD**, 21 E. 57: a painting apiece by Derain, Utrillo, Chirico, and others. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through July 31.) . . . **MILCH**, 108 W. 57: more or less realistic oils and water colors by a small group of American painters. (Weekdays 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.; through Fri., May 31.) . . . **NEW ART CIRCLE**, 41 E. 57: paintings that show how differently various artists tackle the same subjects. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Fri., May 31.) . . . **PERLS**, 32 E. 58: new work by Darrel Austin, Mario Carreño, and others of this gallery's regulars. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through Fri., May 31.) . . . **REHN**, 683 5 Ave., at 54: a big exhibition of work by artists who customarily show at this gallery, among them Reginald Marsh, Edward Hopper, and Charles Burchfield. (Weekdays 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through June 30.)

GWEN LUX—Modern sculptures, fluent in style. (Associated American Artists, 711 5 Ave., at 55. Weekdays 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.)

JOHN W. MCCRADY—First show in nine years by this painter, who is at his best when using Southern Negroes as subjects. (Associated American Artists, 711 5 Ave., at 55. Weekdays 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.)

BORIS MARGO AND DAY N. SCHNABEL—Abstract-Symbolist paintings by Mr. Margo, and sculptures and drawings by Miss Schnabel. (Brandt, 15 E. 57. Daily 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Sat., May 25.)

MARIA—A Brazilian artist shows some vivid Surrealist sculptures. (Valentine, 55 E. 57. Daily 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Sat., May 25.)

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, 5 Ave. at 82—Paintings by veterans of the Army Air Forces; through Fri., May 31. . . . Selections from the Museum's print collection, and a show called "The Taste of the Seventies," or Victorianism in art both here and abroad. (Weekdays, including Memorial Day, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.; Sun., 1 to 5 P.M.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53—A comprehensive show of oils, drawings, and water colors by Georgia O'Keeffe; through Aug. 25. . . . A retrospective show of paintings by Chagall; through June 23. (Weekdays, including Memorial Day, 12 noon to 7 P.M., and Thurs. Eves. until 10; Sun., 1 to 7 P.M.)

NEW YORK SOCIETY OF WOMEN ARTISTS—Twenty-second annual exhibition, in which the ladies show themselves to be livelier than most male groups. (National Academy of Design, 1083 5 Ave., at 89. Daily 1 to 5 P.M.; through Sun., May 26.)

DMITRI PETROV—Abstract-Surrealist paintings and drawings. (Hugo, 26 E. 55. Weekdays 11 A.M. to 5 P.M.; through Mon., May 27.)

PHILIP PIECK—New paintings, and some earlier ones, by an artist who is also a priest. (Contemporary Arts, 106 E. 57. Weekdays 10 A.M. to 6 P.M., and Mon. Eve., 8:30 to 11; Sun., 2:30 to 5:30 P.M.; through June 7.)

ROUAULT—Color aquatints. (Kleemann, 65 E. 57. Weekdays 9:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.)

MANFRED SCHWARTZ—Cool, colorful, slightly vacant-looking paintings on a variety of subjects. (Durand-Ruel, 12 E. 57. Daily 9:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Sat., May 25.)

SCULPTURE—Small pieces by Alexander Calder, David Smith, Hugo Robus, and a lot of others. (Clay Club, 4 W. 8. Mon. through Fri., including Memorial Day, 2 to 5 and 7 to 10 P.M.; Sat., 2 to 5 P.M.; through June 15.)

SONJA SEKULA—Abstractions, many of them dealing with nocturnal fantasies. (Art of This Century, 30 W. 57. Weekdays 11 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.)

GAR SPARKS—An odd combination of serenity and Surrealism in a first one-man show of paintings by a New Jersey painter. (Julien Levy, 42 E. 57. Weekdays 11 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.; through June 8.)

WILLIAM THON—New landscapes and seascapes. (Midtown, 605 Madison, at 58. Daily 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through Sat., June 1.)

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC—Over fifty lithographs and the painting "Messalina." (St. Etienne, 46 W. 57. Weekdays 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.; through June 15.)

LEROY WEBER, JR.—An artist who bows playfully, in a variety of media, to Klee and Picasso, among other moderns. (Chinese, 38 E. 57. Weekdays 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through Wed., May 29.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM, 10 W. 8—Paintings and sculptures from the Museum's permanent collection. (Daily 1 to 5 P.M.; through Wed., May 29.)

DRUCILLA P. WING—Splashy, colorful pictures, mainly of Mexico. (Contemporary Arts, 106 E. 57. Daily 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through Fri., May 24.)

MUSIC

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—Final performances—"Madama Butterfly," Thurs. Eve., May 23. . . . "The Bartered Bride," Fri. Eve., May 24. . . . "Carmen," Sat. Mat., May 25. . . . "La Traviata," Sat. Eve., May 25. . . . "Rigoletto," Sun. Mat., May 26. . . . "La Bohème," Sun. Eve., May 26. (New York City Center, 131 W. 55. CI 7-8989. Eves. at 8:15. Mats. at 2:30.)

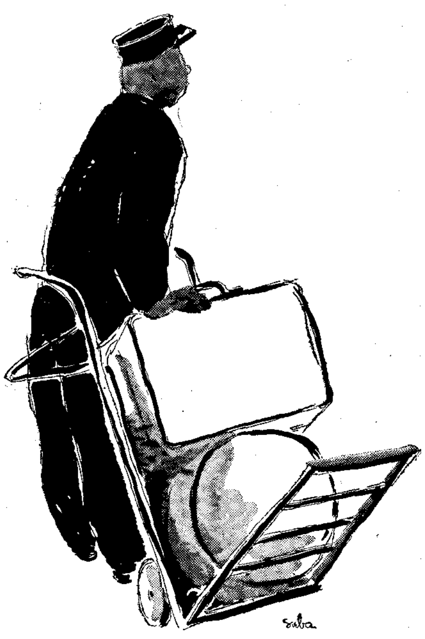
CARNEGIE HALL POP CONCERTS—A series of informal concerts presented nightly at 8:30 by seventy members of the Philharmonic-Symphony and a variety of soloists. Smoking is permitted in the boxes, where sandwiches and beer are also available. A schedule of the conductors and soloists who will perform this week and next follows: Edward Fendler conducting, with Regina Resnik, Emanuel Vardi, and others, Thurs., May 23. . . . David Broekman conducting, with Dorothy Kirsten, Robert Merrill, and others, Fri., May 24. . . . Mario Cortez conducting, with the Borodkin String Quartet and others, Sat., May 25. . . . Constantine Callinicos conducting, with Nicola Moscona and others, Sun., May 26. . . . An evening of jazz music, with Coleman Hawkins and others, substituting for the Philharmonic-Symphony, Mon., May 27. . . . Ann Kullmer conducting, with Zinka Milanov and Kurt Baum, Tues., May 28. . . . Maurice Abravanel conducting, with George and Ruggiero Ricci, Wed., May 29. . . . Fiorello LaGuardia and David Broekman conducting, with Eileen Farrell and others, Thurs., May 30. . . . D'Artego conducting, with Lucille Manners and Bess Myerson, Fri., May 31. . . . Maurice Abravanel conducting, with Sidney Foster, Sat., June 1. (CI 7-7460.)

MALL CONCERT—Robert Shaw conducting the Collegiate Chorale in a concert under the auspices of the Naumburg Foundation. (Central Park Mall. Thurs. Eve., May 30, at 8:15.)

ORGAN MUSIC FESTIVAL—Members of the American Guild of Organists presenting their annual series of recitals at the following churches: Grace Church, B'way at 10, Mon. Aft., May 27, at 4; Church of the Ascension, 5 Ave. at 10, Tues. Aft., May 28, at 4; Brick Presbyterian Church, Park at 91, Wed. Aft., May 29, at 12:30; St. Paul's Chapel, B'way at 116, on the Columbia University campus, Wed. Aft., May 29, at 5; St. Bartholomew's, Park at 50, Thurs. Aft., May 30, at 5; Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 139 W. 46, Thurs. Eve., May 30, at 8:30; Temple Emanu-El, 5 Ave. at 65, Fri. Aft., May 31, at 12:30; and Calvary Church, 4 Ave. at 21, Fri. Aft., May 31, at 5.

SPORTS

BASEBALL—At the **YANKEE STADIUM**: Yankees vs. Washington (Mon., May 27, at 8:30 P.M., and Tues. and Wed., May 28-29, at 2:30 P.M.); Yankees vs. Philadelphia (Thurs., May 30, doubleheader, at 2 P.M., and Fri., May 31, at 8:30 P.M.); Yankees vs. St. Louis (Sat., June 1, at 2 P.M.). . . . **POLO GROUNDS**: Giants vs. St. Louis (Thurs., May 23, at 2:30 P.M.); Giants vs. Boston (Fri., May 24, at 8:45 P.M., Sat., May 25, at 2:30 P.M., and Sun., May 26, doubleheader, at 2 P.M.). . . . **EBBETS FIELD**: Dodgers vs. Chicago (Thurs., May 23, at 2:30 P.M.); Dodgers vs. Giants (Mon., May 27, at 2:30 P.M., Tues., May 28, at 8:30 P.M., and Wed., May 29, at 2:30 P.M.); Dodgers vs. Boston (Thurs., May 30, doubleheader, at 2 P.M.)



BOXING—Lee Oma vs. Jersey Joe Walcott, heavyweights, 10 rounds, Fri., May 24; Steve Belloise vs. Coley Welch, middleweights, 10 rounds, Mon., May 27; Beau Jack vs. Johnny Greco, welterweights, 10 rounds, Fri., May 31. (Madison Square Garden. Preliminaries at 8:30 P.M.; main bouts at 10.)

DOG SHOWS—Morris and Essex Kennel Club. (Giralda Farms, Madison, N.J. Sat., May 25; judging starts at 10 A.M.) . . . Huntingdon Valley Kennel Club. (Justa Farm, Huntingdon Valley, Pa. Sat., June 1; judging starts at 10 A.M.)

GOLF—Goodall Round Robin Invitation Tournament. (Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, N.Y. Thurs. through Sun., May 30-June 2.)

HORSE SHOWS—Harrison. (Harrison, N.Y. Sat. and Sun., May 25-26.) . . . Deep Run Hunt Club. (Richmond, Va. Sat. and Sun., May 25-26.) . . . County Fair. (Devon, Pa. Mon. through Sat., May 27-June 1.)

RACING—At **BELMONT**: weekdays at 1:30 P.M.; through Sat., June 1. Peter Pan Handicap, May 25; Suburban Handicap, May 30; the Belmont Stakes and the National Stallion Stakes, June 1. . . . **HAVRE DE GRACE**: weekdays at 3:15 P.M.; through Mon., May 27.

TROTTING RACES—Weekdays at 8:40 P.M., beginning Fri., May 24, at Roosevelt Raceway, Westbury, L.I.

YACHTING—Championship regattas on the Sound—New York Yacht Club. (Glen Cove, L.I. Sun., May 26, at 2 P.M.) . . . American Yacht Club. (Rye, N.Y. Thurs., May 30, at 2 P.M.)

OTHER EVENTS

UNITED NATIONS MEETINGS—Forty-five tickets of admission to the open sessions of the Security Council are made available, on a first-come-first-served basis, just before each session begins, at Building Four, Hunter College, Jerome Ave. at 200 St.

ATLANTIC FLEET VISIT—Navy ships of all descriptions—battleships, carriers, destroyers, cruisers, and others to make up a total of forty—will be anchored in the Hudson River next week beginning Mon., May 27. Naval enthusiasts can go aboard the craft, embarking between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. from piers at 125th Street and at Dyckman Street.

RED, WHITE, AND BLUE BALL—The annual dinner-dance for the benefit of the Soldiers and Sailors Club. (Ritz-Carlton. Thurs., May 23, at 8 P.M.; for tickets call AS 4-4353.)

FRENCH FASHION DOLLS—A collection of nearly two hundred and fifty miniature mannequins, representing most of the famous old Paris dressmaking houses, exhibited in a benefit for French relief. The dolls, dressed, coifed, and bejewelled to the nines, are shown in stage settings designed by Jean Cocteau and Christian Bérard, among others. (451 Madison, at 50. Weekdays, including Memorial Day, 11 A.M. to 10 P.M.; Sun., 12 noon to 6 P.M.; through June 30.)

SPORTS LITERATURE—French and English manuscripts and illustrations of the fourteenth through the eighteenth century, dealing with sports and pastimes, from wrestling to chess, and including an autographed copy of Izaak Walton's little essay on fishing. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36. Weekdays, except Memorial Day, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; through June 29.)

TRIBAL MASKS—An exhibition of masks, some of them quite rare, worn by the natives of Bali, the Congo, Ceylon, and such places, for wars, dances, weddings, visits from the witch doctor, and other of life's complexities. (Museum of Natural History, Central Pk. W. at 79. Weekdays 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.; Sun., and Memorial Day, 1 to 5 P.M.; through Aug. 30.)

CHINESE JADE—A small show of plaques, vases, and other objects, loaned by private collectors. (China House, 125 E. 65. Thurs. and Fri., 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.; Sat., 9 A.M. to 12 noon; through Sat., May 25.)

PLANETARIUM—"Spring and Summer Stars" is the title of the current demonstration. (Hayden Planetarium, Central Pk. W. at 81. Mon. through Fri. at 2, 3:30, and 8:30 P.M.; Sat., Sun., and Memorial Day, at 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8:30 P.M. Extra performance Sat. at 11 A.M.)

ON THE AIR

PRESIDENT TRUMAN—Addressing the Governors' Conference at Oklahoma City, Mon., May 27, at 2 P.M., WABC, WMCA.

DISCUSSION OF ATOMIC POWER—Albert Einstein, Harold E. Stassen, Archibald MacLeish, and others, Tues., May 28, at 10 P.M., WABC.

UNITED NATIONS MEETINGS—All open sessions of the Security Council, at the Bronx Branch of Hunter College, are broadcast in their entirety over WNYC.

MUSIC—N.B.C. Symphony, Leonard Bernstein conducting, Sun., May 26, at 5 P.M., WEAF. . . . Ford Sunday Evening Hour, Fritz Reiner conducting, Sun., May 26, at 8 P.M., WJZ. . . . New

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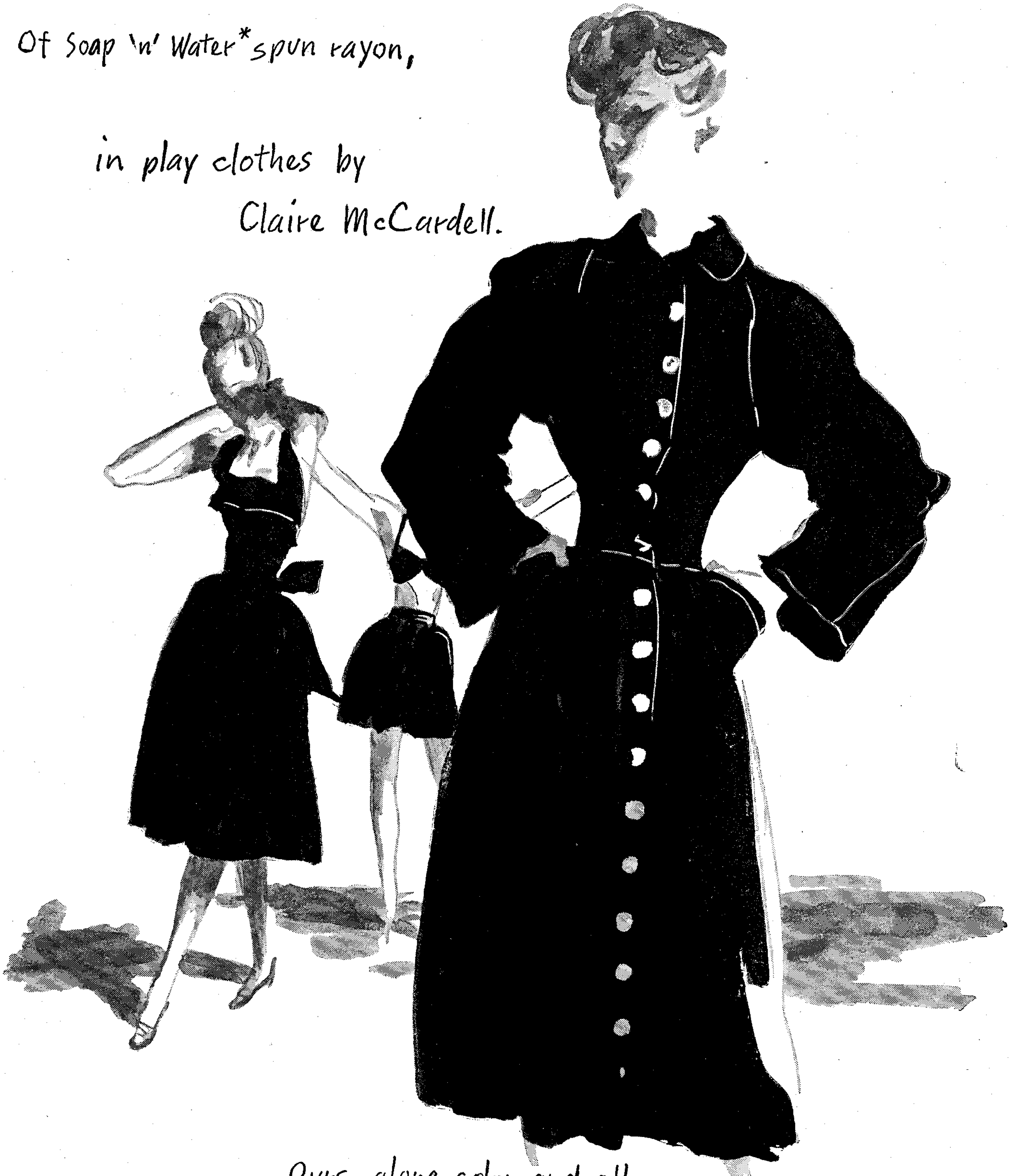

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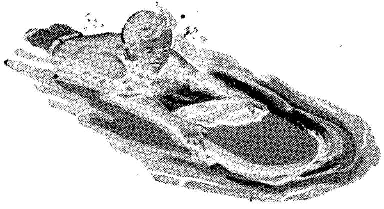

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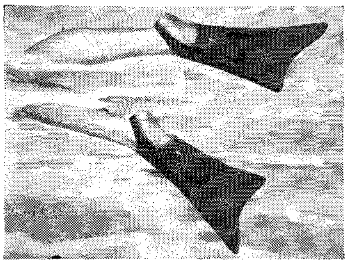

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

York City Opera, Fri., May 24, at 8:45 P.M., and Sat., May 25, at 8:30 P.M., WNYC. . . . Helen Traubel, soprano, Mon., May 27, at 9 P.M., WEAF. . . . Carnegie Hall Pop Concerts: Thurs., May 23, Sun. through Wed., May 26-29, and Fri. and Sat., May 31-June 1; all at 8:45 P.M., WNYC. . . . Josh White, Pete Johnson, Sarah Vaughan, and J. C. Heard's orchestra in a musical program typical of Café Society Downtown, which happens to be where it originates, Tues. and Thurs. at 11:30 P.M., WMCA.

NEWS COMMENTATORS—Elmer Davis, Mon. through Fri. at 9:55 P.M., and Sun. at 3 P.M., WJZ. . . . Fiorello LaGuardia, Sun. at 12 noon and at 9:30 P.M., WJZ. . . . Raymond Swing, Mon. through Fri. at 7:15 P.M., WJZ.

SPORTS—Boxing: Lee Oma vs. Jersey Joe Walcott, Fri., May 24; Beau Jack vs. Johnny Greco, Fri., May 31; both at 10 P.M., WJZ. . . . Racing: Peter Pan Handicap, at Belmont, Sat., May 25; the Belmont Stakes, at Belmont, Sat., June 1; both at 4:30 P.M., WABC, WOR.

MOTION PICTURES

COLONEL EFFINGHAM'S RAID—Charles Coburn doing a nice turn as a Southern newspaperman battling against civic evildoers in a Georgia town. Joan Bennett provides a decorative touch to the piece. (R.K.O. 23rd Street, 8 Ave. at 23; through Mon., May 27. . . . R.K.O. 58th Street, 3 Ave. at 58; R.K.O. 86th Street, Lexington at 86; R.K.O. 81st Street, B'way at 81; Riverside, B'way at 96; Nemo, B'way at 110; and Coliseum, B'way at 181; through Wed., May 29.)

DAYS AND NIGHTS—The siege of Stalingrad, as adapted from the Konstantin Simonov novel. The picture has enough authentic history in it to hold one's interest, but it's not nearly as good as the book. (Stanley, 7 Ave. at 41; through Wed., May 29.)

IT HAPPENED AT THE INN—From a great-grandfather, aged 106, to a foppish spratling in his twenties, everybody who turns up at this particular inn is worth your fond attention. Made in postwar France. (55th Street Playhouse, 154 W. 55.)

THE KID FROM BROOKLYN—There aren't many comedians around today anywhere near as funny as Danny Kaye, and he makes the most of his opportunities in this rehash of "The Milky Way," the 1934 stage success. It's about the milkman who became welterweight champion without striking a blow. Vera-Ellen's dancing adds a lot to the film. (Astor, B'way at 45.)

THE LOST WEEKEND—Even if you drink nothing stronger than ginger ale, you should find this account of five days in the life of an alcoholic continuously impressive. Ray Milland, who won an Academy Award for his performance, heads a superb cast, and the picture itself is the winner of the 1945 New York Film Critics' Award. (Loew's 175th Street, B'way at 175; through Tues., May 28. . . . Lexington, Lexington at 51; Loew's 72nd Street, 3 Ave. at 72; Loew's 83rd Street, B'way at 83; and Olympia, B'way at 107; through Wed., May 29. . . . Sheridan, 7 Ave. at 12; starting Wed., May 29.)

OPEN CITY—A superlative description of the workings of the Italian underground, featuring a cast that is just about perfect, although not many of the actors ever had much to do with the cinema before. Made in Rome after the city's liberation in 1944, the picture is a far cry from the cloak-and-dagger stuff that Hollywood has been passing off in its variations on the same theme. (World, 153 W. 49.)

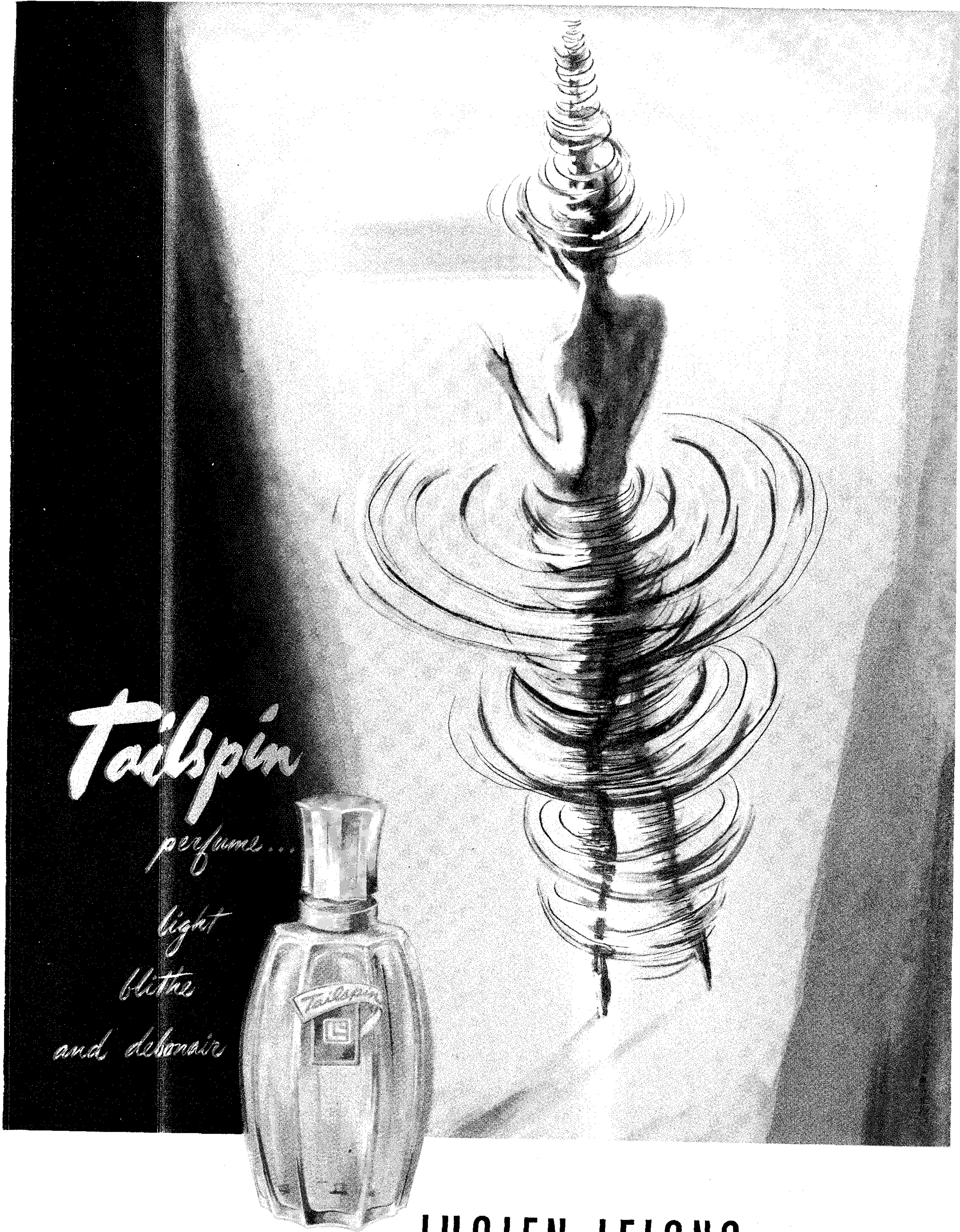
PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN—Successively playing a wilting actress, a balmy schoolmistress, a morose peasant, and the lush and lively wife of a barge keeper, Françoise Rosay, the French actress, brings off a successful tour de force by her versatility. (Little Carnegie, 146 W. 57.)

THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE—John Garfield and Lana Turner as James M. Cain's pair of primitive lovers who finally succeed in killing the proprietor of a hamburger joint, only to discover that murder does not pay. The film would be pretty dull if it weren't for some excellent satire on legal machinations, deftly handled by Hume Cronyn and Leon Ames. (Capitol, B'way at 51.)

SPELLBOUND—Psychoanalysis and suspense, the former a bit elementary, the latter as good as Hitchcock can make it. The cast includes Ingrid Bergman, Gregory Peck, Michael Chekhov, and Wallace Ford. (Stoddard, B'way at 90; through Tues., May 28. . . . Plaza, 42 E. 58; through Wed., May 29. . . . Loew's 86th Street, 3 Ave. at 86; Sun. through Wed., May 26-29. . . . 8th Street Playhouse, 52 W. 8; Mon. through Wed., May 27-29. . . . Terrace, 9 Ave. at 23; Tues. through Sat., May 28-June 1.)

THEY WERE EXPENDABLE—An exciting story about the Navy's PT boats which buzzed around the Philippines in the days when the Japanese were lurking behind every reef. Robert Montgomery and John Wayne are the PT captains. (Schuyler, Columbus Ave. at 84; Sat. through Mon., May 25-27.)

THREE STRANGERS—There's a good deal of foolishness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Tailspin

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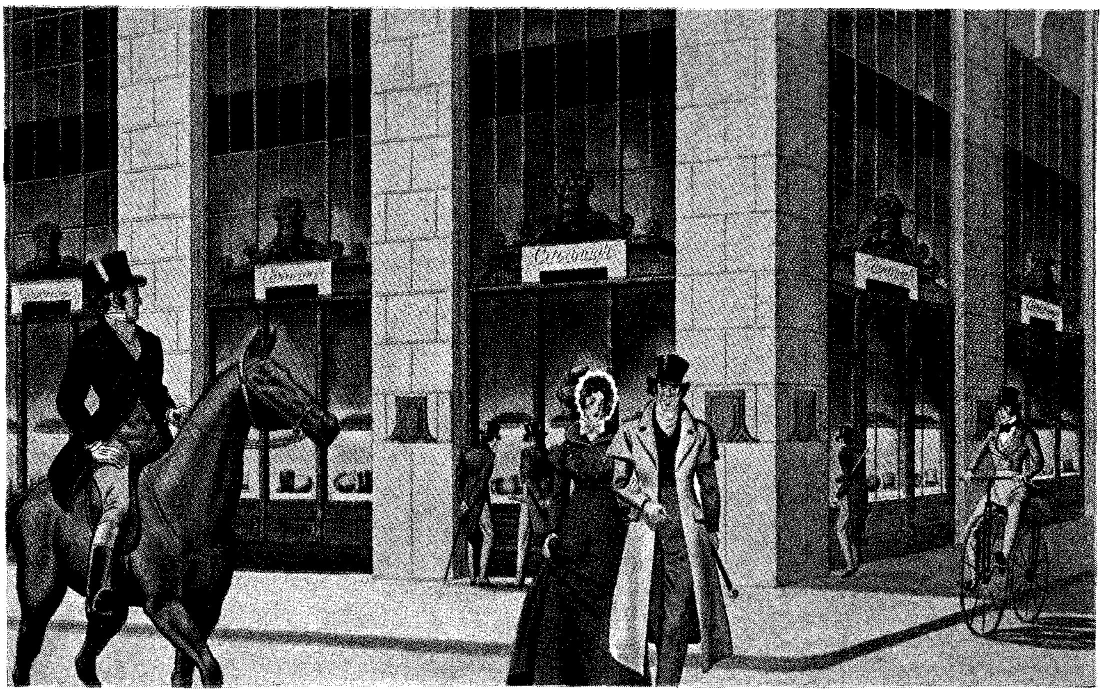
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in this one about an idol that arranges to have a trio of sad characters win a sweepstakes and then crosses them up when they try to cash in on their ticket. Geraldine Fitzgerald, Peter Lorre, and Sydney Greenstreet are entertaining, however, even in the film's most preposterous moments. (Colony, 2 Ave. at 79; Thurs., May 23. . . . Normandie, Park at 53; Fri. through Sun., May 24-26.)

Vacation from Marriage—A drab little English couple are converted by the impact of war into a pair of stimulating people. Robert Donat and Deborah Kerr effect the transformation with the greatest possible felicity. (Waverly, Ave. of Americas at 3; through Fri., May 24. . . . Terrace, 9 Ave. at 23; through Sat., May 25. . . . 8th Street Playhouse, 52 W. 8; through Sun., May 26. . . . Gramercy Park, Lexington at 23; Sun. through Wed., May 26-29. . . . Trans-Lux 85th Street, Madison at 85; Tues. through Sat., May 28-June 1.)

A Walk in the Sun—The unostentatious story of an American infantry platoon trudging a bloody six miles from a Salerno beach to an inland farmhouse. The film is done without any factitious heroics, and it is a good, grim job. Dana Andrews, Richard Conte, George Tyne, and, for that matter, all the rest of the cast, seem quite authentic. (R.K.O. 23rd Street, 8 Ave. at 23; through Mon., May 27. . . . R.K.O. 58th Street, 3 Ave. at 58; R.K.O. 86th Street, Lexington at 86; R.K.O. 81st Street, B'way at 81; Riverside, B'way at 96; Nemo, B'way at 110; and Coliseum, B'way at 181; through Wed., May 29.)

Ziegfeld Follies of 1946—A dozen variety acts in glorious Technicolor, most of them gloriously boring. There's some fine dancing, though, by Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly, and Victor Moore is comical in an old Weber and Fields sketch. (State, B'way at 45; through Wed., May 29.)

Note—"Hymn of the Nations," a half hour with Toscanini, is a good bit more stimulating than most recent films. Leading an orchestra and a choir through Verdi's "Hymn," Toscanini is as dramatic as any actor around today. Jan Peerce is the soloist. (Little Carnegie, 146 W. 57.)

REVIVALS

Beloved Enemy (1936)—Merle Oberon, Brian Aherne, and the Irish Rebellion. (Trans-Lux 52nd Street, Lexington at 52; through Fri., May 24.)

Dodsworth (1936)—Sinclair Lewis's retired businessman abroad. Walter Huston, Ruth Chatterton, and Mary Astor. (Loew's 175th Street, B'way at 175; Wed., May 29.)

Duck Soup (1933)—The Marx Brothers, this time in nightgowns and at war. (Thalia, B'way at 95; through Wed., May 29.)

Guest in the House (1945)—An adaptation of the play about a family-wrecker. Anne Baxter and Ralph Bellamy. (Beverly, 3 Ave. at 50; Tues. and Wed., May 28-29.)

Hail the Conquering Hero (1944)—Preston Sturges' tale of a bogus Marine hero. Eddie Bracken, Ella Raines, and William Demarest. (Beverly, 3 Ave. at 50; Sun. and Mon., May 26-27.)

I Married a Murderer (1937)—A London thriller, formerly called "The Woman Alone." Sylvia Sidney. (Sutton, 3 Ave. at 57; Tues. through Thurs., May 28-30.)

Made for Each Other (1939)—Carole Lombard and James Stewart as an ordinary young couple. (Trans-Lux 85th Street, Madison at 85; through Fri., May 24.)

Naughty Marietta (1935)—The Victor Herbert operetta, with Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. (Carlton, B'way at 100; Thurs., May 23.)

These Three (1936)—Miriam Hopkins, Merle Oberon, and Joel McCrea in a doctored version of Lillian Hellman's play "The Children's Hour." (Alden, B'way at 67; through Sat., May 25.)

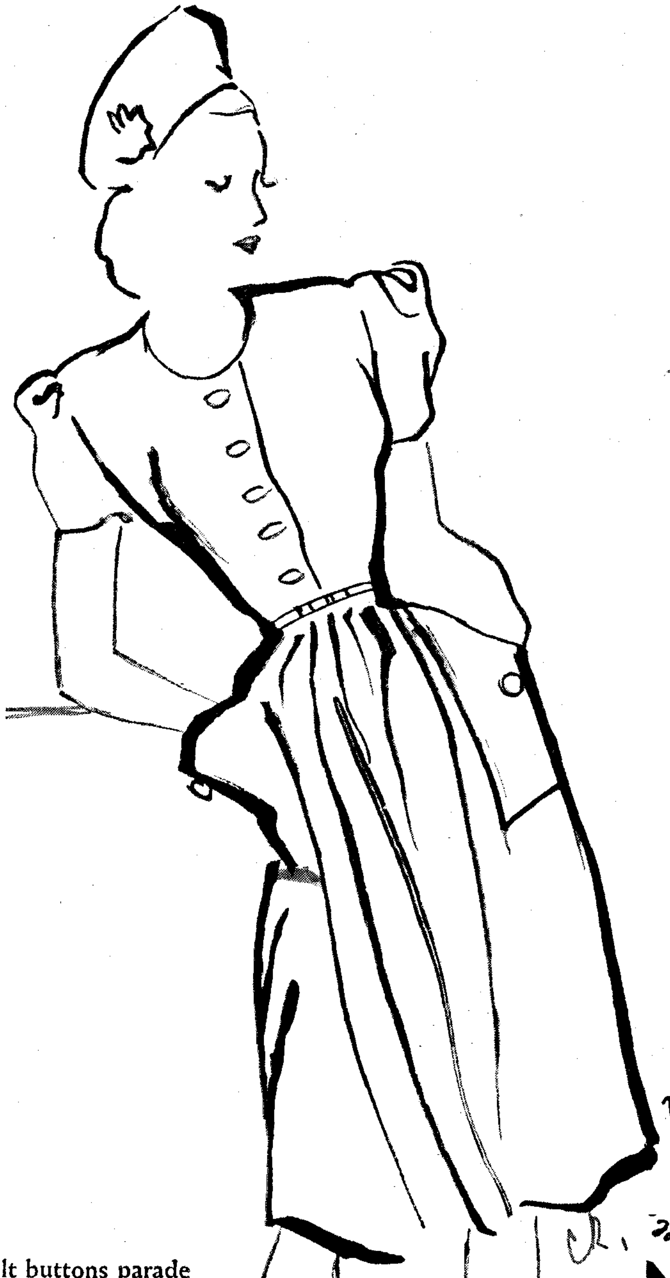
True to Life (1943)—A comedy having to do with love and the radio. Mary Martin, Franchot Tone, and Dick Powell. (Schuyler, Columbus Ave. at 84; Tues. and Wed., May 28-29.)

Wuthering Heights (1939)—Merle Oberon and Laurence Olivier on the Brontë moors. (Beverly, 3 Ave. at 50; through Sat., May 25.)

The Young in Heart (1938)—Sentimental age-and-youth comedy. Minnie Dupree, Janet Gaynor, Paulette Goddard, and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. (Carlton, B'way at 100; Tues. and Wed., May 28-29.)

Note—The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53, is presenting the following films as part of a series of wartime documentary pictures—THURS., MAY 23: "Land and Live in the Jungle" (1944). . . . FRI. THROUGH SUN., MAY 24-26: six short pictures produced by the O.W.I. . . . MON. THROUGH THURS., MAY 27-30: "Naval Operations" (1942), "The Fleet that Came to Stay" (1945), and "Attack! The Battle for New Britain" (1944). . . . FROM FRI., MAY 31: "Know Your Ally, Britain" (1944) and "United States" (1945). The films are shown weekdays at 3 and 5:30 P.M., and Thurs. Eves. at 8:15; Sun. at 1:30, 3:30, and 5:30 P.M.

Young-Timers shine in Midas-touched rayon shantung
. . . colors out of a morning sky
$35



Gilt buttons parade down the bodice front, gleam on voluminous hip pockets . . . sliver of a gold kid belt. Lime, pink, aqua, oyster white . . . sizes 10 to 16.

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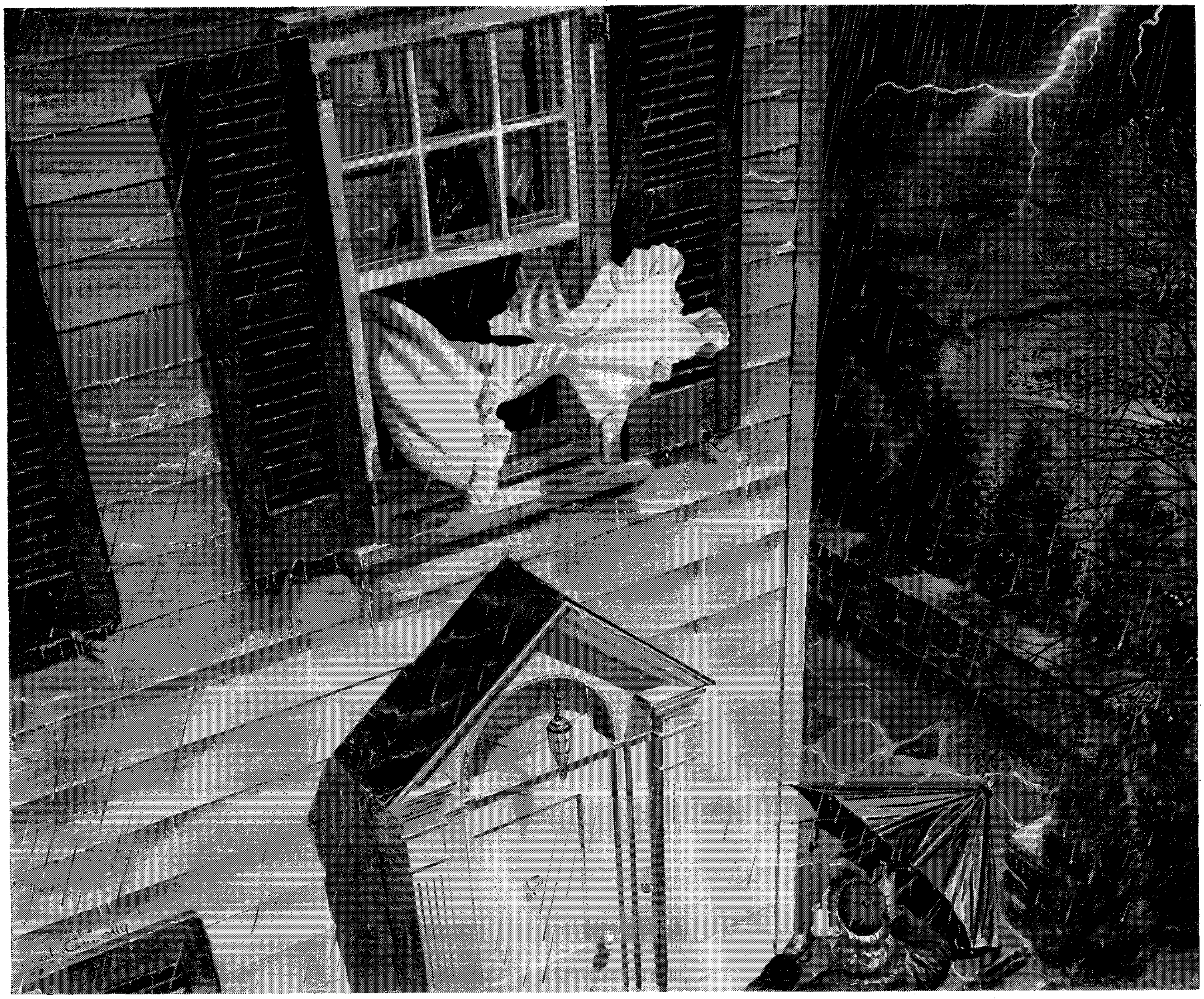

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CURTAINS have more problems than sudden summer storms! They're baked in glaring sunlight. They get no end of handling. They must also contend with frequent launderings, with radiator heat, with dryness, dampness, dust, and a lot of other things.

How do they stand it?

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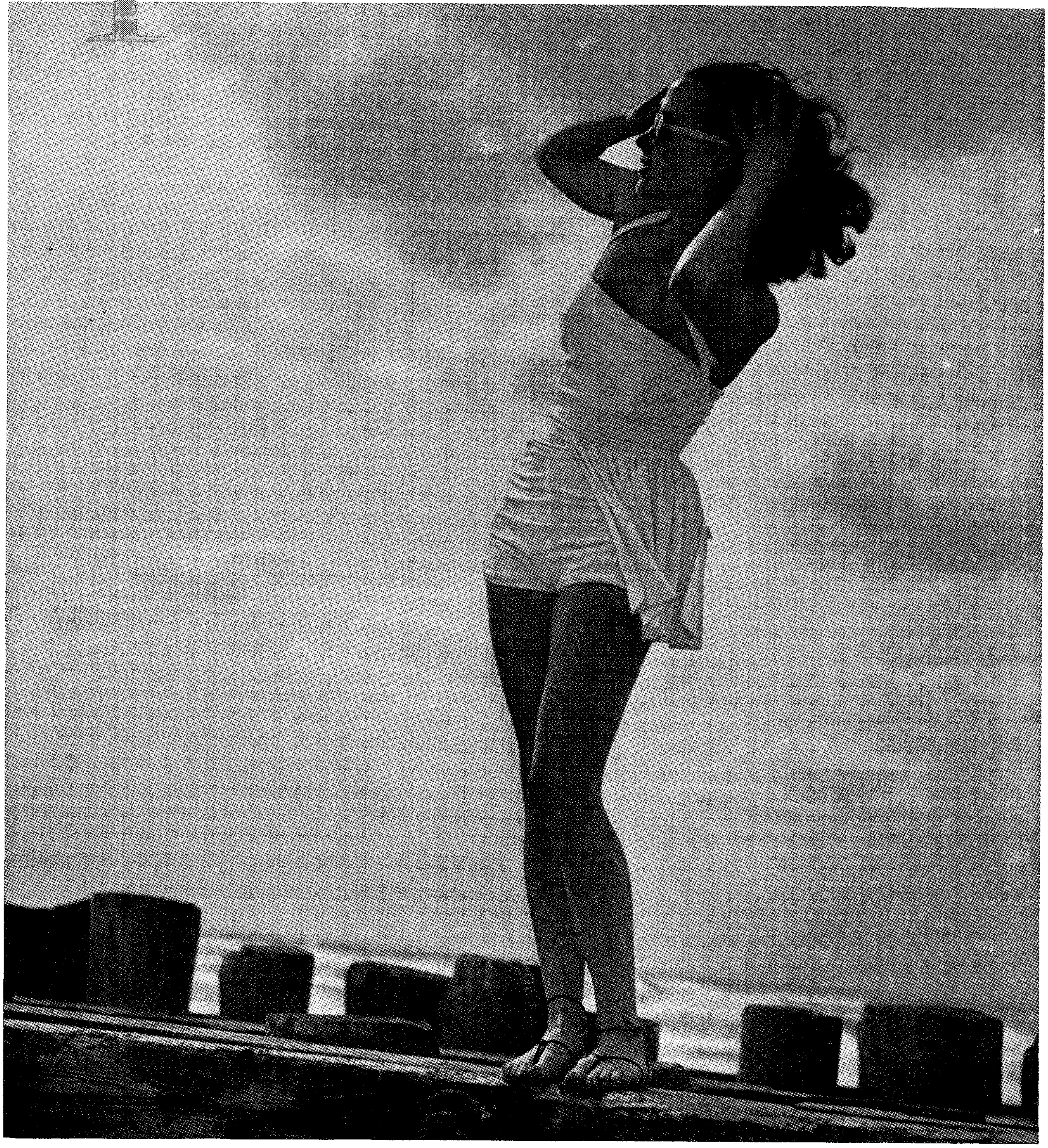
This identification is awarded only to fabrics containing CROWN* rayon, after they have passed the CROWN Tests for serviceability.

Peck and Peck



Palumbo

Blinding white on the beach...

Tanagra figurine of a bathing suit, sculpt out of William Winkler's beautiful new rayon jersey... and you should see it in grey as well. 10 to 16, 25.00. The white-edged Continental sunglasses, by Oculens, 3.98.

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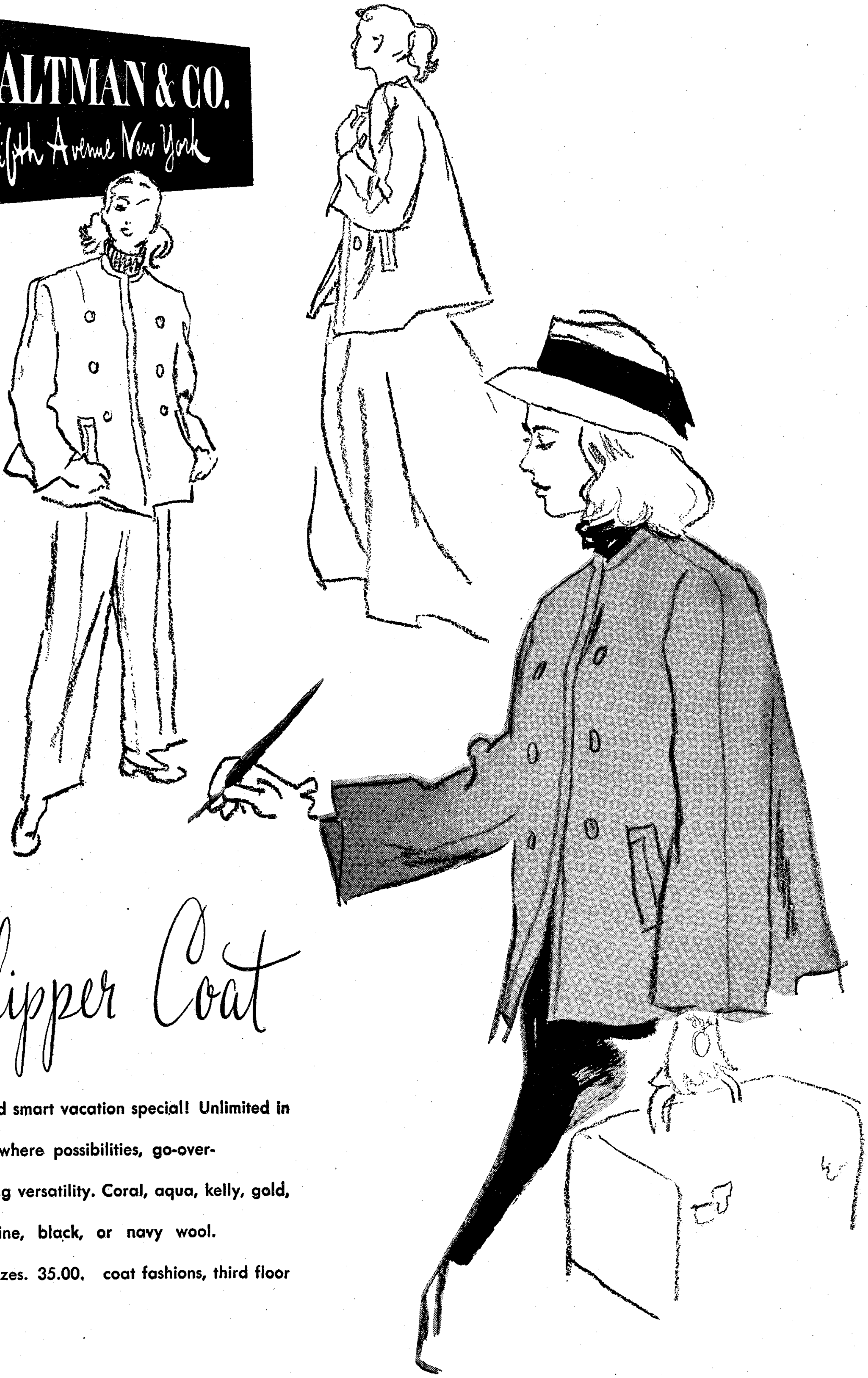

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Short and smart vacation special! Unlimited in go-everywhere possibilities, go-over-everything versatility. Coral, aqua, kelly, gold, white wine, black, or navy wool.

Misses' sizes. 35.00. coat fashions, third floor

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

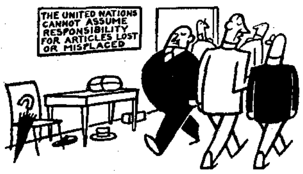
Notes and Comment

FLASH FROM THE POST-ATOMIC DAWN: A garbage collector in Kew Gardens has painted a legend on his truck reading, "World Ashes Removal."

INFILTRATION NOTE: There's a brokerage house in the Wall Street district named Carl Marks & Co.

MACY'S ran a full-page ad in the paper the other day, and we found it rather disappointing. The ad was in the form of a Western Union message to President Truman and we noticed that the telegram was headed, "Charge to the account of R. H. Macy & Co." Can you beat that for leading a double life?

EVERY thinking person has been aware that sooner or later the United Nations would reach a point beyond which it would be unable or unwilling to go. We may have discovered that point in a sign we recently saw at Hunter, which read, "The United Nations cannot assume responsibility for articles lost or misplaced." Presumably, this harsh official disclaimer is meant to imply that as far as Trygve Lie and his colleagues are concerned, the package we left in the Hunter cafeteria some weeks ago and the umbrella we inadvertently abandoned in a telephone booth there on the morning of April 26th are as lost as Atlantis, and have as little chance of making the agenda. If so, we are prepared to strike a bargain. Should the gold watch left us by an opulent uncle disappear on our next visit to Hunter, we will blame nobody but ourself and go no further than to place an ad in the *Times*; for its part, the United Nations, freed from the nagging necessity of getting down on its knees and grubbing about for our inheritance, must remove that chilling sign and henceforth cheerfully assume responsibility for all articles or covenants lost or misplaced by any countries whatsoever anywhere on earth.


THE UNITED NATIONS CANNOT ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARTICLES LOST OR MISPLACED

THE clearest glimpse we have had so far of the metaphysical possibilities of the United Nations, we have decided, came a week or so ago, during Mr. Gromyko's second non-appearance in connection with the Iran dispute, when the Australian representative, Mr. Hasluck, expressed his regret that the absent member was not present to tell those present what effect he regarded his absence as having on them.

MRS. SAMUEL I. ROSENMAN, chairman of the National Committee on Housing, is back in town on a permanent basis after several years of commuting between Washington and Manhattan, and we recently treated ourself to a timely talk about housing with her. This is in line with our new editorial policy of family *reportage*; we told of Judge Rosenman's return to private practice a few weeks ago, and in due course we hope to cover the return of the two Rosenman boys—James, a Navy veteran and pre-law-school Harvard senior, and Robert, now in prep school in Washington.

Mrs. Rosenman received us in the family's Essex House apartment, two rooms, both crisply wallpapered in pink and green stripes with violet triangles. "We're getting a *three*-room place right under this one next month," she said. "It's Helen Traubel's at the moment, but I learned she was moving out, because I heard her sing so. I was puttering around the other morning, and suddenly I heard her singing, 'I—am—go-ing—to—the—coun-try—this—sum-mer!' Thank God for the way she articulates! I pounced on the opportunity that very day, and everything is all set. Bobby won't have to spend his weekends on the living-room couch, and we'll have room for the Judge's favorite armchair." This chair is in a Central Park West apartment that the Rosenmans subleased when they moved to Washington. They can get their furniture out, but not their tenants.

Mrs. Rosenman's interest in private housing antedates, and may very well account for, her interest in public housing. "I was married in 1924," she told us, "and that was a year of housing shortage, almost as bad as today. Our first home was a tiny apartment on a Hundred and Eleventh Street, with no light and very little air. The Judge told me I'd suffocate if I didn't find something to do outside the home. I'd been doing settlement-house work, because of my interest in children, and I went ahead and took a course in juvenile-story writing at Columbia. I was coasting along, trying to think of a plot and not suffocate, when one evening at dinner Ira Robbins, chairman of the Housing Committee of United Neighborhood Houses, invited me to help him in a drive to amend the old-law-tenement laws." The upshot of this suggestion was that Mrs. Rosenman drew a deep breath and went to work. Her son Bobby was a year old then, and she took him along to conferences on how to do away with windowless rooms and the like. Need we say he has grown up with a lively horror of old-law tenements?

In 1934, Mrs. Rosenman helped form the Citizens' Housing Council, which advocated better housing. She began to write about housing in the *Times*, advocating better housing, and later organized a Council committee which plumped for specific improvements in medium-cost housing. Her chairmanship of the National Committee on Housing dates from 1941. During the war, she and her associates persuaded the War Department to release critical materials for housing for war workers, fought people who resisted new community housing because they didn't want "foreigners" or "postwar ghost towns," and published booklets with titles like "Help for the Aging House," "The Bottleneck of Housing Costs," and "Cost Measurement in Urban Redevelopment." Mrs. Rosenman is optimistic about the present building crisis. "I know more houses are going to be built, because I know builders," she told us. "It's in their blood to build. One danger is we may get a good deal of shoddy housing, because of the pressure for low-cost homes. The National Committee on Housing is listened to because it's the only housing group that includes *everybody* in housing—real-estate people, housing authorities, bankers, and so forth. We have a whole group of public housers sitting down together with real-estate men, perfectly peaceably." Builders' blood or no, our impression as we left Mrs. Rosenman was that she feels good chiefly because she heard Miss Traubel singing that song.

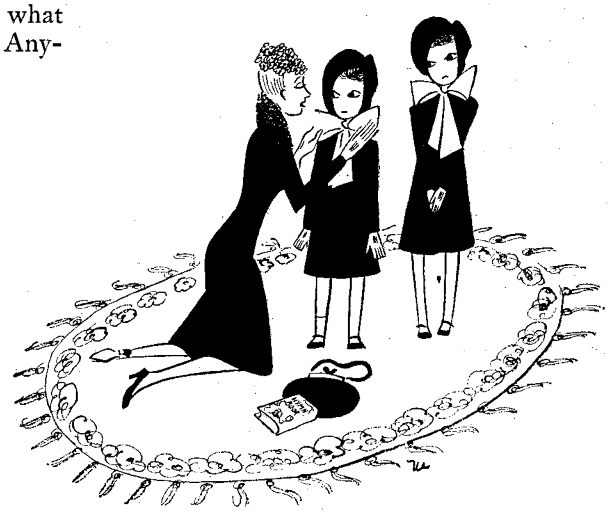
Penalty

A MRS. ADAMS with whom we're acquainted has a number of charge accounts around town under her maiden name of Young. She's been meaning to have them changed ever since her marriage, a year or so ago, but what with one thing and another . . . Anyhow, she heard a while back from friends who, like herself, have accounts at one of the leading department stores that they had been sent word of their right to purchase nylons there. She called the store in a state of considerable excitement, gave her name as Miss Young, and complained that she hadn't received a notice and that her need for nylons was as great as anyone else's. "You'll have to be patient," a clerk told her. "We're following an alphabetical list, and we only reached Flannery this morning." "But my name is Adams," the lady said. The clerk pointed out that she had said it was Young. "That was before," Mrs. Adams said. "I'm not Miss Young now. I'm Mrs. Adams, and I want some nylons." "I assure you, Madam, you'll be much better off if you don't try any of *that* sort of thing," the clerk said sharply, and hung up.

Pocket of Resistance

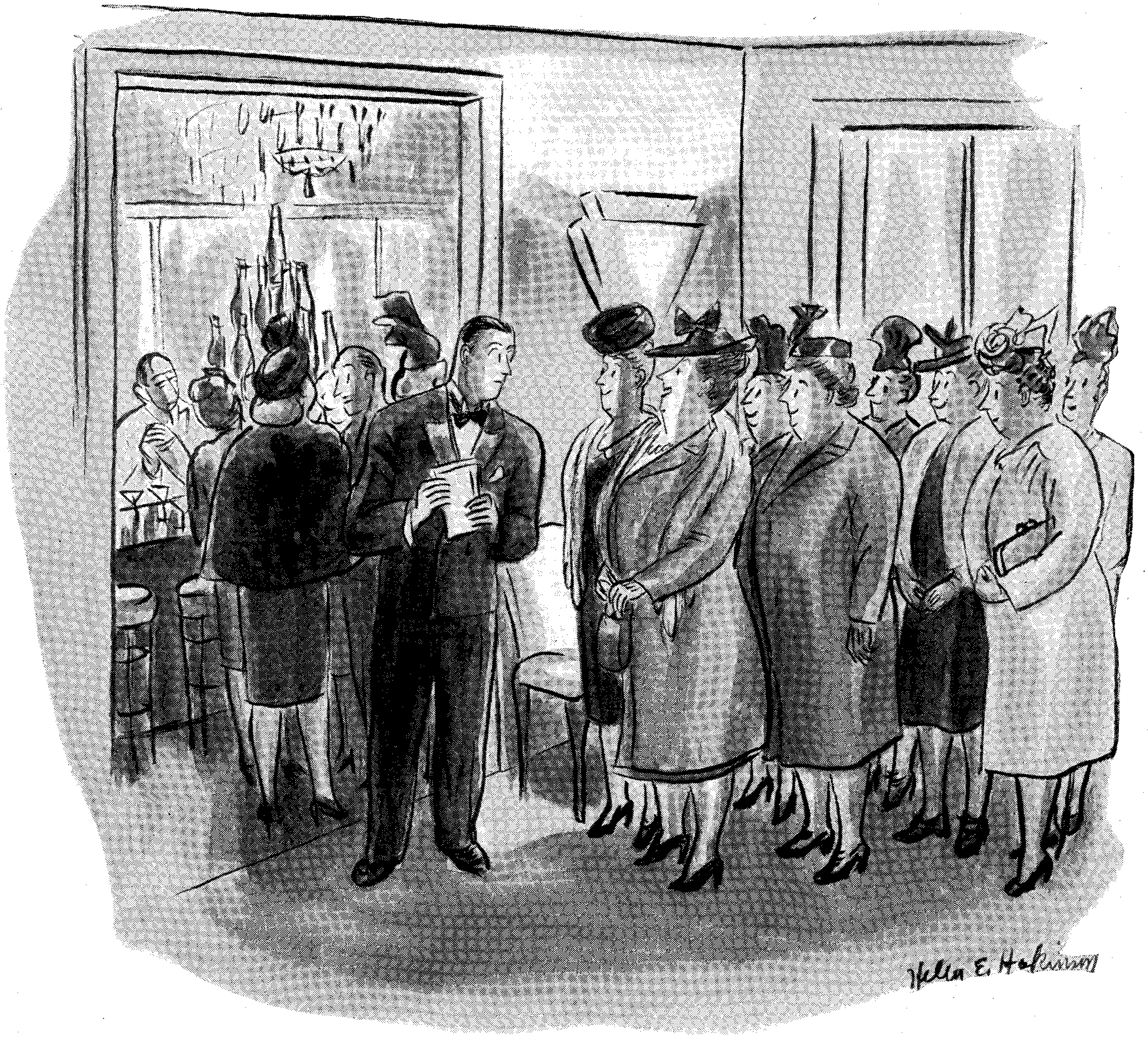
ONE of the most oldfangled business concerns in town is Kerby & Bro., Rule Makers, which since 1847 has been supplying tailors, paperhangers, glazers, cobblers, coopers, and such people with an unchanging line of nineteenth-century-model handmade rulers, squares, gauges, and other measuring devices. For the last sixty-nine years, the firm has occupied several dim, cluttered rooms on the second floor of an exhausted, sway-backed, red brick five-story building on the northeast corner of Fulton and Cliff Streets, which, as recently as the twenties, high-seniority employees of the company were in the habit of referring to as the new shop. It was our privilege the other day to have a talk with Robert D. Kerby, a proud, melancholy gentleman of sixty, who is the present head of the business and the grandson of its founder. We found him, idle, retrospective, and alone, puffing a Between-the-Acts cigar and leaning against a worn slate workbench in a combination workroom, storeroom, and office, in the center of which is a tiny, potbellied stove with a stovepipe that meanders off at an angle and up through the ceiling. He is a small man (five feet four) and he was wearing a black leather cap, flannel shirt, and overalls. "Sit down, son," he told us, indicating a draftsman's high stool, on which we perched. Then he sidled around us and seated himself on a pile of lumber near the table.

"I'm the last of the Kerbys now," he said. "Dad died last year, after getting through eighty-four years. He was a fine craftsman and he loved fine wood—just like Granddad. I mean our kind of wood—hickory from Louisiana, cedar, Turkish boxwood, and hard maple. Those are the woods for rules, son. They're tough and they're light-colored, so you can see the division markings without going nutty from eyestrain. Well, rule makers are dying out fast. We used to have nineteen men here and now we've got two. Nobody's learning the art. Nobody wants to. It takes five years and everybody's in too big a hurry for that. Who cares about quality any more, except us and a few of our old customers? There aren't seven rule companies like ours left in the country." He stomped out his cigar on the floor and said cheerfully, "Sometimes I think I'll live to see the end of the whole shooting match."



Mr. Kerby's opinion of the twentieth century is low, and he obviously derives a keen, if hopeless, satisfaction from resisting change. "We're the only upstairs tenants left in this building," he told us. "The rest of them got out twenty years ago. Good riddance! Dad saw no reason to make a change, and neither did I. There isn't a finer old building in town. The only change we've made since Granddad died in 1899 was to switch from gaslight to electricity, in 1916. But Dad made them leave the gas fixtures up, just in case. Everything else is just the way Granddad left it. Why change anything when it's right to begin with? We're still using the patents—models, you'd call them—that Granddad made himself." We asked Mr. Kerby to show us one, and he dug into a drawer and pulled out a one-foot ruler. It was made of a light wood that had mellowed to a rich, golden yellow. The ends were capped with brass, fixed to the wood with brass studs, and the division markings and numerals were sharply and deeply cut—hand-engraved, Mr. Kerby told us. "We don't make many of these any more," he said. "Back in Granddad's time, though, we had a contract for them with the Board of Education. Well, times change."

Mr. Kerby gave a snort, presumably for progress, and said that although he was only a boy when his grandfather died,



"We're the Eight Reckless Bidders and we have a reservation."

• •

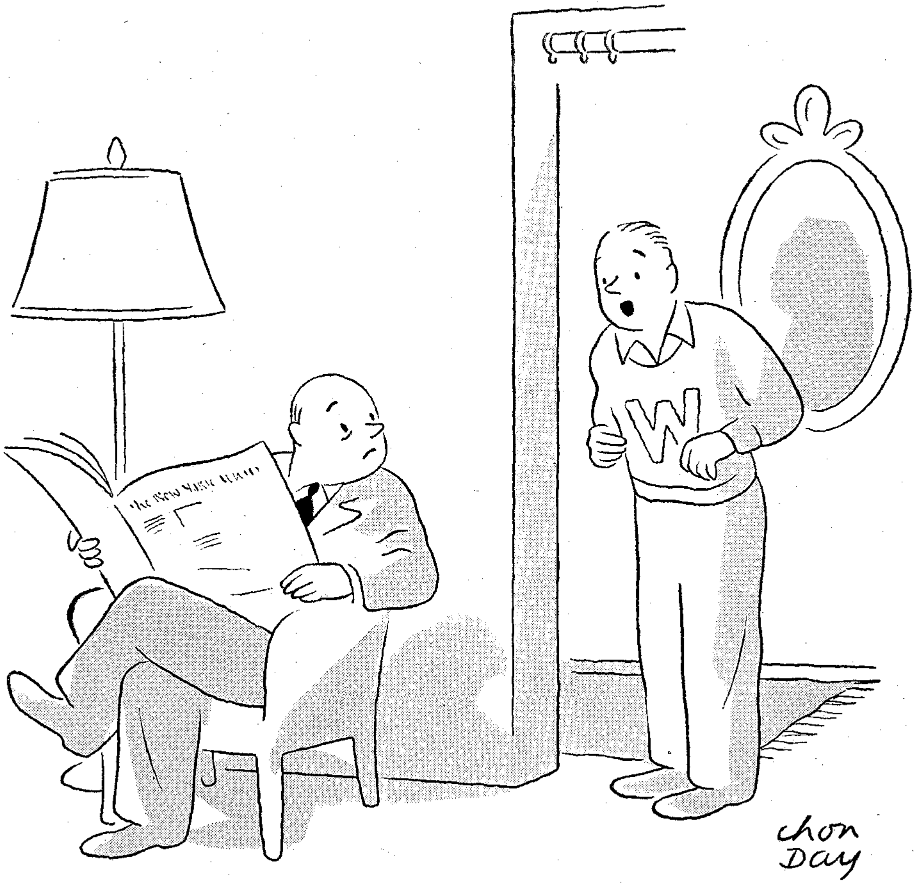
he remembered the old man clearly. "He was a big, hefty fellow," he said. "Weighed over two hundred pounds and had a white beard two feet long. He would have made two of me. He had plank steak every day for lunch. Outside of business and eating, the things he liked best were voting Republican, listening to Baptist preachers, and playing Santa Claus at Christmastime for a department store over in Brooklyn, where we lived. He did it just for fun. He made them let him sit in a show window every afternoon. I can see him now—slumped down in a rocking chair, sound asleep, with his pipe in his beard and all the kids staring in at him through the glass. Well, I'm glad he didn't live to see what's happened to the world. I'll just give you an example. A while back, a fellow who keeps a store over on Gold Street told me we were foolish to make such good rules. He said we ought to use cheap materials, so our things would wear out in a hurry." Mr. Kerby shook his head. "I didn't argue with him, but it made me feel sick. No one would have *dared* to say that to Granddad." He gave a gloomy laugh. "Or even to Dad."

The Price Is Right

AN indentured Hollywood writer has smuggled out word of an incident concerning his boss, one of the old-line, cigar-biting producers. On a recent somnolent afternoon, the producer sent his secretary down to ask whether, as a writer, our friend could get him a book wholesale. The latter said he guessed he could, all right. What book did the boss want? The secretary trotted off, and returned some minutes later to say that the boss hadn't decided—he'd let our man know as soon as he made up his mind.

Clockless Time

AMONG the new gadgets presently forthcoming is one that will help solve the telling-time problem for people and make them less dependent on clocks, watches, and the New York



"Can I wear the suit tonight, Dad?"

• •

Telephone Company. An outfit called Electronic Time, Inc. (no relation to didactic, Yale-spawned you-know-what), intends to set up in business and has asked the Federal Communications Commission for permission to operate a high-frequency station here to broadcast the time every fifteen seconds around the clock (an expression common in the old, pre-electronic days). The broadcasts will be picked up by miniature receiving sets that will fit into a vest pocket or add a mere three ounces to the weight of a lady's handbag. They will be about half as big as a pack of cigarettes, or approximately the size of a two-way radio Dick Tracy recently found on the wrist of a murdered man. The little sets will pick up only their home station, which hasn't been assigned its call letters yet. All this may sound simple enough, but after a brief fill-in by Albert R. Mathias, the head of E.T., Inc., who was a Navy officer in the war, we can assure our readers it isn't. Mr. Mathias' invention involves, for example, chokes and high fidelity, matters that must be handled with some delicacy in a family magazine.

Mr. Mathias told us that he was a consulting engineer before the war and liked building his own radio sets, some of which were very efficient. "But I could never get the time on my radios when I wanted it and how I wanted it," he said. "I used to have a couple of watches, but my dog chewed them up. Nothing like that is likely to happen to our little radios, which are made of plastic. Might have a tube burn out is all. I was down in Cuba about eighteen months ago, trying to help raise the standards of the Cuban Navy, and I got to thinking how time-conscious everyone was going to be after the war. I got out of the Navy and set to work developing my set. It's got selectivity as good as the average full-sized set. No yapping or yowling on other stations will interfere with its reception. It'll work wherever a radio will work, but because it has a fixed frequency, it can be made in a small size. It's not cluttered up with coils; just has one, with a powdered-iron core." Mr. Mathias then hinted that he'd taken a couple of tips from radar, but he wouldn't say what they were.

The miniature radio sets built so far have two dry-cell batteries, but these will be replaced by a mercury battery as soon as that type becomes available; mercury batteries last four times as long. The radio speaker is half an inch in diameter. A person who wants to get the time will simply put his set to one ear, press a button, and wait for the time announcement. Mr. Mathias will have what will probably be the smallest radio studio in existence, a package-sized room on the fifty-third floor of the Lincoln Building. It will synchronize its time announcements with the tone beats broadcast by the Bureau of Standards in Washington, which gives out the official time. It will be only powerful enough to broadcast within a radius of thirty-five miles of New York, but E. T., Inc., hopes to open stations in other cities as electronic time goes on.

Mr. Mathias hasn't decided whether to use a male or female voice for the announcements, which in either event will be broadcast by a wire recorder, similar to the one used by the Telephone Company for the weather. The station will also broadcast weather reports and brief news bulletins from another wire, alternating with the time. "Nothing that will interfere with giving the time, though," Mr. Mathias told us. "We'll say, 'Ten-thirty—rain,' or 'Three-twenty—Dodgers, eight; Giants, two.' " Since the money for all this has to come from somewhere, the broadcasts will have to have sponsors. "But we'll eliminate as much gaff as possible," Mr. Mathias said, which makes him the optimist of the week.

Scoop

A HIGH-PRINCIPLED young woman recently had occasion to visit the offices of the Friends of Democracy, which are in a building on East Fifty-seventh Street. Stepping into the elevator, she was shocked to see that the operator, a kindly-faced Negro, was fixed into place on his stool by a short, thick chain which ran from his belt to one side of the car. Scenting the possibility of a four-page exposé in *PM*, she asked the operator for an explanation of this indignity. "Well, Ma'am," he said, "seems like in the old days, when I got to napping, I used to fall off this little old stool. Now the chain catches me when I start to go."

Mother Superior

ACCORDING to certain private calculations (which, upon request, we'll be glad to mail to readers in a plain wrapper), the Old Vic Theatre Company has been more fussed over than any other group of transatlantic visitors since the late Queen Marie of Rumania and her entourage, and it was with a firm resolve not to out-bubble Beebe that we went over to the Algonquin one morning last week and had a brisk, continually interrupted talk with Laurence Evans, general manager of the company. Evans is a tall, thin Englishman of thirty-four with thin blond hair and a mustache. When we saw him, he had on a monogrammed white shirt, gray pin-striped trousers, red bedroom slippers, and was alternately sipping orange juice and answering the telephone. "Saks?" he said, motioning us to a chair. "Yes, of course. . . . No, I'm afraid Mr. Olivier's rather too busy with rehearsals and broadcasts to give out nylons this week. Please accept his apologies."

Evans put down the phone, offered us a heavy Turkish cigarette, and explained that although there had been a number of minor catastrophes, there hadn't been as many as were expected, and the engagement is going smoothly. "When I came over in January with John Burrell, the director," he said, "I didn't see how we should manage. The hotels told us they had a five-day maximum. Some very efficient person in Theatre Incorporated—they're our godfathers, you know—persuaded the Algonquin, Astor, Lincoln, Royalton, and Mansfield to take in a few of us apiece. The Oliviers wangled rooms at the St. Regis, and Richardson got into the Drake. Really worked out splendidly, what with a bit of doubling up. Then it turned out that the Ministry of War Transport said they couldn't spare the space for us to come by ship. That meant flying, and *that* meant raising the cost of the whole venture. Aldrich was quite decent about it." Thanks to Richard Aldrich's decency, which he has since had no financial reason to regret, thirty-two members of the company came over in a chartered plane and the thirteen others followed on regular airliner flights the next day.

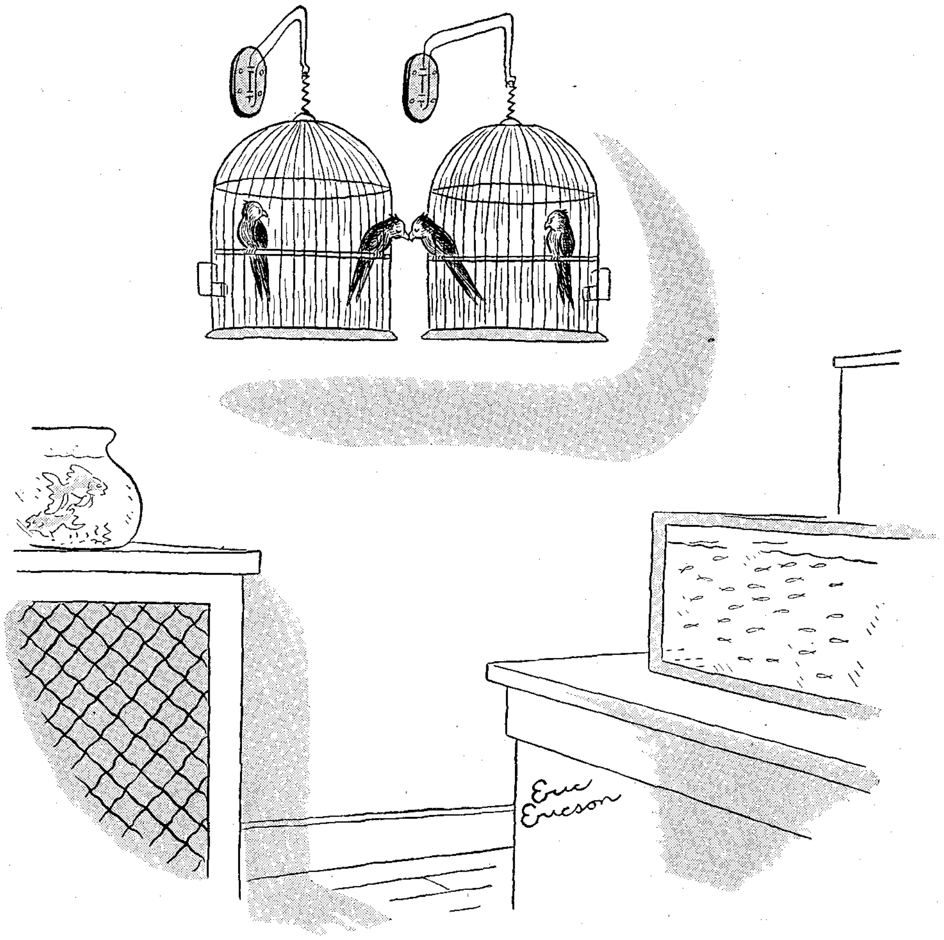
Besides their salaries, members of the company are receiving an allowance from Theatre Incorporated for food and lodging. "It averages about five dollars a day for food," Mr. Evans told us. "The top eight performers get twenty-five dollars' extra allowance a week, and some of us will be paying double taxes before we're through. The withholding is being taken out here, but most of the cast will get it back, for only a few of them will make more than five hundred dollars on the trip." The favorite dishes of the players are shad roe, lobster, and strawberry ice cream, not necessarily all at the same meal. The phone rang again, and, as we choked on our Turkish cigarette, we heard Evans say, "Sounds completely fascinating, but I'm afraid both Mr. Richardson and Mr. Olivier are too busy. Perhaps an understudy? . . . No? . . . Well, I'm sure they'd be charmed if they only had time. *Do* pass on their appreciation and thanks. Goodbye." He turned back to us. "Audience participation," he said. "They want somebody in the audience to read a line from Shakespeare, then have Larry read it, to see who can do it better. I'm defeated by these people's approach. They sound so damned confident when they call that you're sure they're someone you know. Then you find it's one of those programs where people throw soap flakes at each other."

Evans put in an uneasy day or two waiting for the Queen Mary to dock with the sets for "Uncle Vanya." "She'd stopped off at Nova Scotia to deliver a thousand war brides," he said, "and that made her late. We got through customs an hour before it closed; otherwise, we'd have had to postpone the opening. Last summer we took 'Peer Gynt,' 'Richard III,' and 'Arms and the Man' to Belgium, France, and Germany, and always succeeded in getting set in thirty-six hours, so we've had plenty of practice."

Several members of the company have had to drop out of performances recently because of colds. "In my capacity as Mother Superior," Evans said, "I packed everyone off to a doctor. He found them run-down and devitaminized, and pumped them full of liver shots and vitamins. Now everyone's rushing off to Harlem and listening to jazz as if it were still the twenties." The phone rang again. "Oh, dear!" Evans said. "They'll be wanting Larry to discuss the Indian question or demonstrate a washing machine. I do hope I don't say something irresponsible." As we tiptoed from the room, we heard him gamely beginning, "I'm afraid Mr. Olivier hasn't had much experience with drums . . ."

Reward

OUR Third Avenue correspondent was nursing a beer in a bar over there last Friday afternoon. A chipper and natty little man came in and the bartender said, "Hi ya, Charlie! How come you're looking so sharp?" The newcomer shrugged. "I got a good night's sleep last night is how," he said. "They threw me out of here nice and early."



AGE OF REASON

HE had the dream only once—in December. He thought about it for a few moments the next morning, and forgot about it until one evening in April, ten minutes before his plane was scheduled to take off. Then, suddenly, it returned to him. Always, when he was about to board a plane, there was a slight tremor; an awareness of risk, however small and controlled; a slight, subconscious realization that each flight might end with death; a hidden knowledge that there was a small, lurking fatality in winds and cloud and valves and wings, and that no amount of airline skill and care and advertising could ever absolutely dispel it. It was that usual minute, buried twinge of disaster that made him remember the dream as he stood at the gate with his wife and sister, looking out at the dark field and the huge, substantial plane and the flickering lights that marked the runways.

The dream had been a simple one. In it, somehow, his sister Elizabeth had died, and he had, in a resigned and hopeless way, followed the coffin to the cemetery and watched with dry eyes as it was lowered into the ground, and then he had returned home. And somehow, in the dream, it had all happened on May 14th. The date had been absolutely clear and definite and had given the dream a real, tragic sense that it might not otherwise have had. When he woke, he tried to figure out why May 14th, an obscure day five months in the future, had been chosen so relentlessly and specifically by his dreaming mind, but it was no use. There were no birthdays in his family in May, no anniversaries, and nothing in particular had ever happened to him or anyone he knew on that day. He had laughed a little, sleepily, to himself, gently touched Alice's bare shoulder in the bed beside him, and had risen and gone to work, in the sensible, everyday atmosphere of drafting boards and blueprints, without saying a word then or later to her or anyone else about the dream.

And then—laughing at the way his five-year-old daughter had sleepily and carelessly said goodbye when he had left the apartment, standing there with the noise of engines filling the fresh April evening air, kissing his sister Elizabeth goodbye—the dream came back. Elizabeth was as rosy and sturdy as ever, a cheerful, pretty girl who looked as though she had just come triumphantly off a tennis court or from a swimming meet, and if there was any touch of doom hanging over her, it was very well hidden.

"Bring me back Cary Grant," Elizabeth said as she brushed his cheek.

"Of course," Roy said.

"I now leave you two to say a fond farewell," Elizabeth said. "Alice, give him his last-minute instructions. Tell him to behave himself."

"I've already briefed him for this mission," Alice said. "No girls. No more than three Martinis before dinner. Telephone me and report twice weekly. Get on the plane and get home the minute the job is done."

"Two weeks," Roy said. "I swear I'll be back in two weeks."

"Don't have too good a time." Alice was smiling but on the verge of tears, as she always was every time he went anyplace without her, even overnight to Washington.

"I won't," Roy said. "I promise to be miserable."

"Good enough." Alice laughed.

"No old telephone numbers secreted on your person?" Elizabeth asked.

"No." There had been a period in Roy's life, just before he married Alice, when he had been quite lively, and during the war some of his friends had come back from Europe with lurid and highly fictionized tales of wild times in Paris and London, and to the women of his family he seemed more dashing and unstable than was the fact.

"God," he said, "it'll be a relief getting away from this female board of directors for a few days."

He and Alice went up to the gate.

"Take care of yourself, darling," Alice said softly.

"Don't worry." He kissed her.

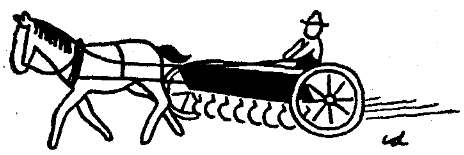
"I hate this," Alice said, holding onto him. "We're always saying goodbye. This is the last time. From now on, no matter where you go, I'm going with you."

"All right." Roy smiled down at her.

"Even if you only go to Yankee Stadium."

"Couldn't be more pleased." He held her tightly for a moment, dear and familiar and forlorn, left behind this way. Then he walked out to the plane. He turned as he started to climb into it, and waved. Alice and Elizabeth waved back, and he noticed again how much alike they looked, standing together, like two sisters in a pretty family, both of them blond and fair, trim, with little tricks of movement and holding themselves that were almost identical.

He turned and went into the plane, and a moment later the door was shut behind him and the plane started rolling toward the end of the runway.



TEN days later, over the phone between Los Angeles and New York, Roy told Alice she would have to come West. "Munson says it's going to take six months," Roy said, "and he's promised me a place to live, and you are hereby invited."

"Thanks," Alice said. "Tell Munson I would like to kick him in the teeth."

"Can't be helped, baby," Roy said. "Commerce above all. You know."

"Why couldn't he have told you before you went out? Then you could've helped me close up the apartment and we could've gone out together."

"He didn't know before I came out," Roy said patiently. "The world is very confused these days."

"I would like to kick him in the teeth."

"O.K." Roy grinned. "You come out and tell him yourself. When do you arrive? Tomorrow?"

"There's one thing you've got to learn, Roy," Alice said. "I am not a troop movement. You can't say, 'Civilian Alice Gaynor will report three thousand miles from here at 4 P.M. tomorrow,' and expect it to happen."

"O.K., you're not a troop movement. When?"

Alice chuckled. "You sound nice and anxious."

"I *am* nice and anxious."

"That's good."

"When?"

"Well"—Alice hesitated thoughtfully—"I have to get Virginia out of school, I have to send some things to storage, I have to rent the apartment, I have to get plane reservations—"

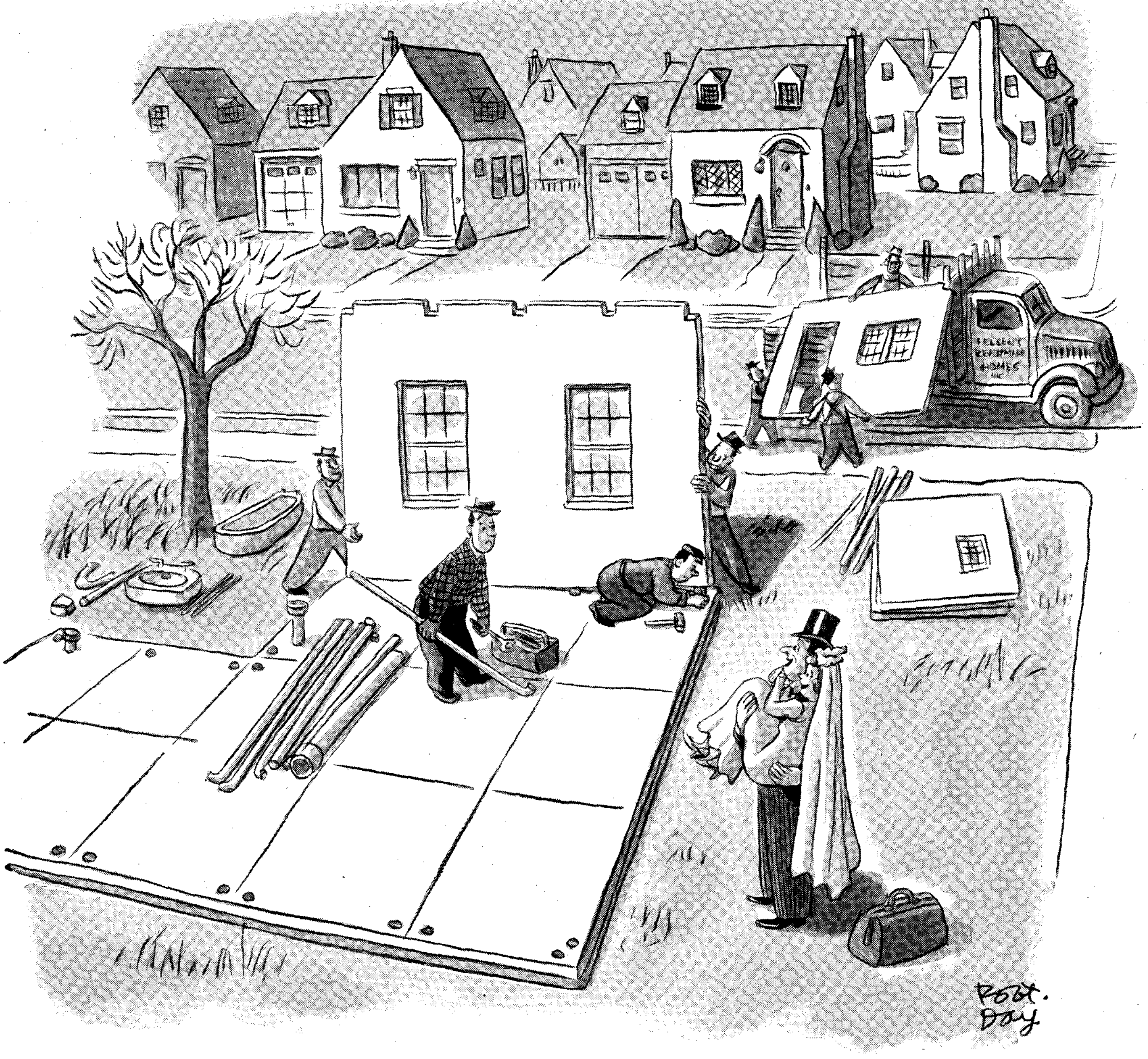
"When?"

"Two weeks," Alice said, "if I can get the reservations all right. Can you wait?"

"No," Roy said.

"Neither can I." They both laughed. "Have you been very gay out there?"

Roy recognized the tentative, inquiring tone and sighed to himself. "Dull as mud," he said. "I stay in in the evenings and read. I've read six books and I'm halfway through General Marshall's report on the conduct of the war."



"Mind putting the front door up next, Mac?"

• •

"There was one evening you didn't read." Alice's voice was careful and purposely light.

"All right," Roy said flatly. "Let's hear it."

"Monica came in from the Coast Tuesday and she called me. She said she saw you with a beautiful girl at a fancy restaurant."

"If there was any justice," Roy said, "they would drop Monica on Bikini Atoll."

"She had long black hair, Monica said."

"She was absolutely right," Roy said. "The girl had long black hair."

"Don't shout. I can hear perfectly well."

"What Monica neglected to say was that it was Charlie Lewis's wife—"

"She said you were alone."

"—and Charlie Lewis was twenty feet away, in the men's room."

"Are you sure?"

"No. Maybe he was in the ladies' room."

"It may be funny to you, but with your history—"

"I will match my history with any husband's," Roy said.

"I hate your sense of humor on this subject." Alice's voice began to tremble a little, and Roy relented.

"Listen, baby," he said softly. "Get out here quick. Quick as you can. Then we can stop this nonsense."

"I'm sorry." Alice's voice was soft and repentant. "It's just that we've been away from each other for so long in these last few years. I'm foolish and jittery. Who's paying for this call?"

"The company."

"That's good." Alice chuckled. "I'd hate to fight on our own money. Do you love me?"

"Get out here quick."

"Do you consider that an answer to my question?"

"Yes."

"O.K.," Alice said. "So do I. Goodbye, darling. See you soon."

"Kiss Virginia for me," said Roy.

"I will. Goodbye."

Roy hung up. First he shook his head

a little wearily, remembering the argument; then he smiled, remembering the end of the conversation. He got up from his chair and went over to the calendar on the desk, to try to figure what day he could expect his wife and child.

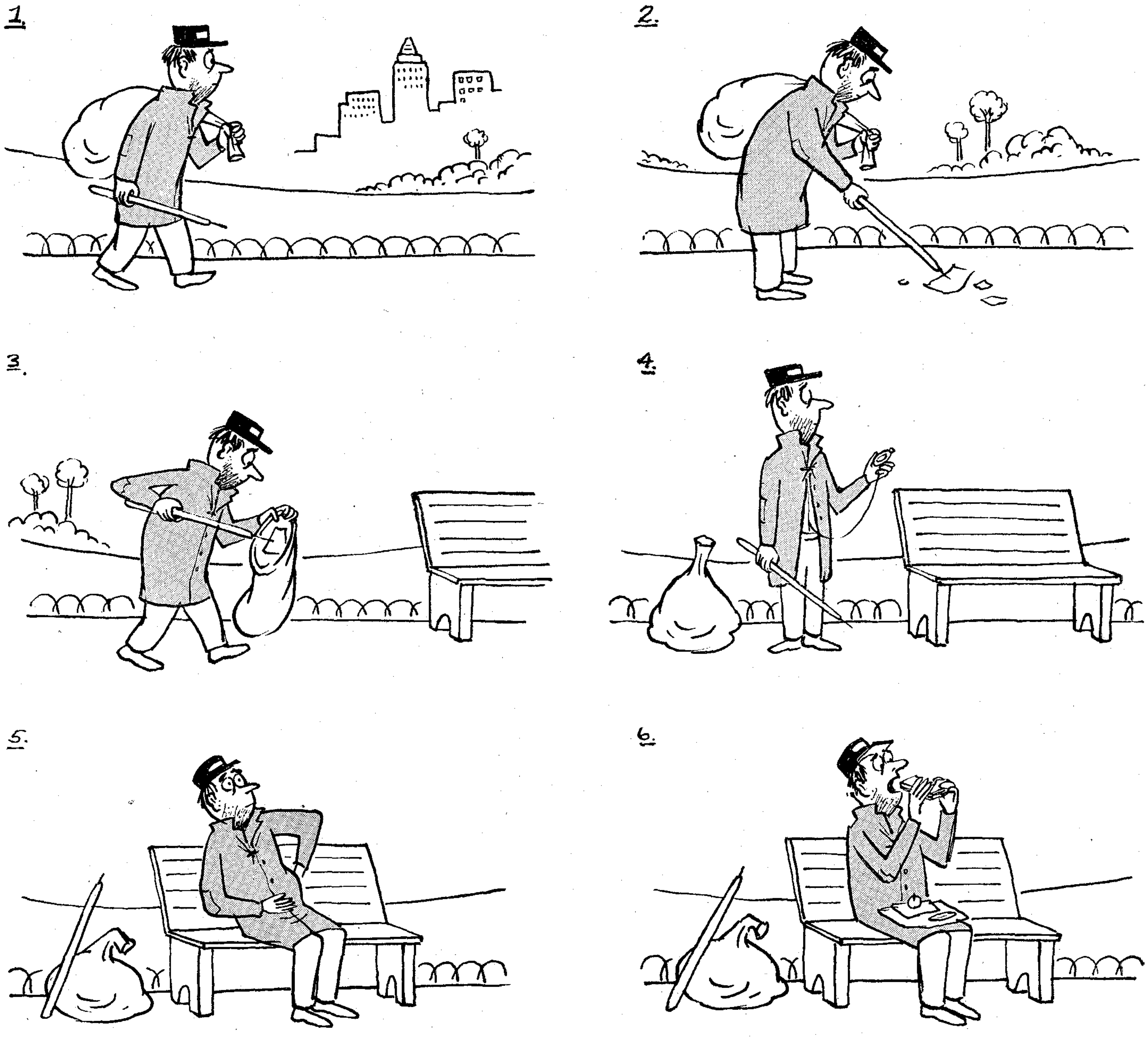
THE telegram came three days later: "RESERVATIONS ON 2 O'CLOCK FLIGHT MAY 14. WILL ARRIVE BURBANK AT 10 P.M. YOUR TIME. PLEASE SHAVE. LOVE, ALICE."

Roy grinned as he reread the telegram, then became conscious of a sensation of uneasiness that refused to be crystallized or pinned down. He walked around all that day with that undefined sense of trouble, and it wasn't until he was dozing off to sleep that night that it suddenly became clear to him. He woke and got out of bed and read the telegram again. May 14th. He kept the lamp on and lit a cigarette and sat up in the narrow bed in the impersonal hotel room and slowly allowed the thing to take control.

He had never been a superstitious man, or even a religious man, and he had always laughed at his mother, who had a fund of dreams and predictions and omens of good and evil at her command. Alice had one or two superstitious habits—like not talking about anything that she wanted to have happen, because she was sure it wouldn't happen if it were mentioned or hoped for too much—but he had always scorned them, too. During the war, when every magazine assured the world that there were no atheists in foxholes, he had never prayed, even in the most gloomy and dangerous times. He had never, in all his adult life, done anything as a result of superstition or premonition. He looked around him at his efficiently furnished, bright, twentieth-century room and felt foolish to be awake now in the heel of the night, chasing phantoms and echoing warnings and scraps of old dreams through the sensible channels of his engineer's mind.

The dream, of course, had been explicit. His sister was to die on May 14th. But dreams never were what they seemed to be, and Elizabeth and Alice looked so much alike, and they were always together and such good friends. . . . He knew enough about dreams to understand that it would be a simple transference in that shadowy, whimsical world—a wife for a sister, a sister for a wife. And now, of all the days in the year, his wife and child had picked May 14th to fly the three thousand miles over the rivers and mountains of the continent from New York to California.

He put out the light much later, with nothing decided, and tried to sleep. He



stared up at the dark ceiling, listening to the occasional swift swhoosh of a car on the street outside, hurrying home through the waning night. For a man who didn't believe in Fate, he thought, who saw the world in terms of simple cause and effect; who felt that no act was inevitable, that what was going to happen tomorrow or the next second was in no place determined and was everlastingly variable; who felt that no man's death or burial place was fixed, that no event was recorded in any future book, that the human race got hints or warnings from no supernatural source—this was a ludicrous and profitless way to spend a night. For a man who walked under ladders, cheerfully broke mirrors, never had his palm read or his fortune told from cards, he felt that he was behaving idiotically, and yet he couldn't sleep.

In the morning he called New York.

"Alice," he said, "I want you to come by train."

"What's the matter?" she said.

"I'm afraid of the plane." He heard her laugh incredulously over the phone. "I'm afraid of the plane," he repeated stubbornly.

"Don't be silly," Alice said. "They haven't had an accident with that plane yet, and they won't start now."

"Even so—"

"And I'm not going to try to keep our little Virginia amused for three days in a roomette," Alice said. "It would take me the whole summer to recover."

"Please," Roy said.

"And I couldn't get train reservations for weeks," Alice said, "and the apartment's rented and everything. What's come over you?" Her voice sounded suspicious and wary.

"Nothing," Roy said. "It's just that I'm worried about flying."

"Good God!" Alice said. "You've flown two hundred thousand miles in all sorts of contraptions."

"I know," Roy said. "That's why I'm worried."

"Are you drunk?" Alice asked.

"Alice, darling," Roy sighed. "It's eight o'clock in the morning out here."

"Well, you sound queer."

"I've been up all night, worrying."

"Well, stop worrying. I'll see you on the fourteenth. Are you sure you're all right?"

"Yes."

"This is a very strange telephone call, I must say."

"I'm sorry."

They talked for a moment more, but quite coldly, and Roy hung up feeling dissatisfied and defeated.

He called again two days later and tried once more.

"Don't ask any questions," he said. "Just do this for me, and I'll explain when you get out here. If you want to come on the plane, that's all right, but don't come on the fourteenth. Come on the fifteenth or sixteenth or seventeenth. Any other day. But not on the fourteenth."

"Roy," Alice said, "you've got me terribly worried. What's come over you? I've asked Elizabeth and she says that this doesn't sound like you at all."

"How is she?" Roy asked.

"Elizabeth is fine. She tells me to ignore you and come out as scheduled."

"Tell her to mind her own damned business." Roy had been working hard and sleeping badly and his voice was raw and nervous, and Alice reacted to it.

"I think I know what's going on," she said coldly. "Monica told me there's a big party at the Condons' on the fourteenth, and you've probably promised to take someone else, and a wife would be a big handicap—"

"Oh, God, will you stop that!" Roy shouted into the phone.

"I haven't been married to you for seven years for nothing," Alice said. "I'm not blind."

"Come out today!" Roy shouted. "Come out tomorrow! Come out the thirteenth! Only not the fourteenth!"

"You know as well as I do that if I give up my reservations, I won't get another until June. If you don't want to see me any more, tell me. You don't have to go through all this rigmarole."

"Alice, darling," Roy pleaded, "I assure you I want to see you."

"Well, then, stop this nonsense or tell me what it's all about."

"Alice, it's this way," he began, resolved to tell her, no matter how much of an idiot it made him feel, but there was a click on the wire and then three thousand miles of whispering silence. By the time he got Alice back on the phone, ten minutes later, he felt too ridiculous, felt that he could not live with himself or his wife if he at this late date exposed himself as a silly, undependable man with a brain gone soft and nervous and irresponsible after all the sane, dependable years.

"I haven't anything else to say," he told Alice when the operator finally made the connection, "except that I love you very much and I couldn't bear it if anything ever happened to you."

He heard Alice crying softly at the other end of the wire. "We have to be together soon," she said. "This is awful. And please don't call me any more, Roy, darling. You're acting so strangely, and after I talk to you, the most miserable ideas grab hold of me. Will it be all right when I get out there?"

"It'll be wonderful, darling," Roy said.

"And you'll never go away without me again? Never?"

"Never." He could close his eyes and see her crouched like a little girl over the phone in the bedroom of their quiet, pleasant home, both her hands on the instrument, her pretty, clever face screwed up with grief and longing, and it was hard to say anything more. "Good night," he said. "Be careful."

He hung up and stared wildly at the blank wall on the other side of the room,

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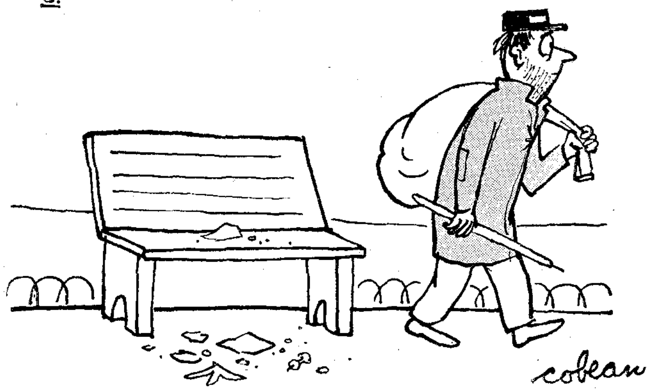

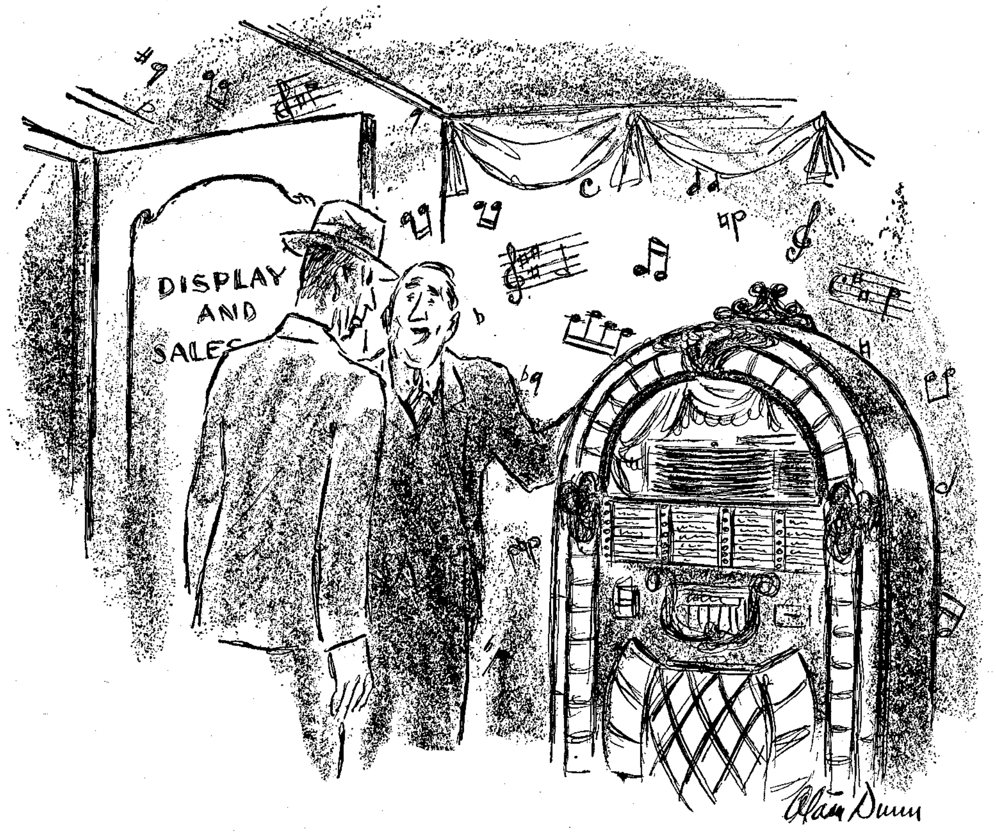

"At last, sir. Good old prewar quality!"

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knowing he wouldn't sleep again that night.

THERE was an early fog on the morning of May 14th, and Roy stared at it, hot-eyed and lightheaded from lack of sleep, and went out and walked along the quiet, gray streets, with only police cars and milk-delivery carts disturbing the soft, thick dawn.

California, he thought; it's always foggy in the morning, fog is general in California before eight, and it's a different time and a different weather on the coast of the Atlantic, and her plane isn't due to leave for hours yet.

It must be the war, he thought. This would never have happened to me before the war. I thought I came out all right, but maybe I was overconfident. All the cemeteries, with the young men tucked away in the sand and spring grass, and the old ladies in black lace dresses dying on the next street in London in the air raids. A man's imagination was bound to take a morbid turn, finally. I must take hold of myself, he told himself reasonably. I'm the man who always felt sane, balanced, healthy in all situations, who always scorned mediums and table tappers, priests and psychoanalysts.

The fog was beginning to lift, and he stopped to stare at the distant smudge of mountains that stood guard over the eastern approaches of the city. Planes had to come in steeply over them and circle the city and land from the westward side. A strip of blue appeared above the mountains and widened and widened, and the fog melted away in wisps among the ugly, fat palm trees that lined the street, and soon the sun was shining on the dewy lawns, and the sky looked clear and blue from Beverly Hills to Scotland.

He went back to his hotel and lay down without even taking his shoes off. Some time later he woke up. Vaguely, in the moment before waking, there was a confusion of planes going down in puffs of smoke, like the newsreel of an air battle, and Virginia's voice over it, regretfully saying, as she always did at bedtime, "Do I *really* have to go to sleep now? I'm terribly wide awake."

He looked at the clock. It was one-forty in New York. They were at the airport now, and the big plane was waiting on the field, with the mechanics fiddling on it and the men checking the gas tanks. The hell with it, he thought. I don't care how foolish I seem.

He picked up the phone. "LaGuardia Field, New York," he said.

"There will be a slight delay," the operator sang. "I will call you."

"This is very important," Roy said. "Urgent."

"There will be a slight delay," the operator said in exactly the same tones. "I will call you."

He hung up and went to the window and stared out. The sky stretched, radiant and clear, over the hills toward New York. I'll tell her the whole thing, he thought, idiotic or not. Forbid her to get on the plane. We can laugh about it later. I'll take the first plane back myself and fly back with them. That'll prove to her it has nothing to do with anything here.

He went and got out his valise and put three shirts in it, then picked up the phone again. Five minutes later he got the airport, but it took another five minutes to get through to the station manager for the airline.

"My name is Gaynor"—Roy's voice was high and hurried—"and this is a very unusual request, so please listen carefully."

"What was that name, sir?"

"Gaynor. G-a-y-n-o-r."

"Oh, yes, Gaynor. Like the dive." The distant voice laughed politely at its own joke. "What can I do for you, sir?"

"My wife and child—"

"You will have to speak louder, please."

"My wife and child!" Roy shouted. "Mrs. Alice Gaynor, on the two-o'clock flight to Los Angeles. I want you to stop them—"

"What did you say?"

"I said I wanted you to stop them. They are not to take the plane. My wife and child. Mrs. Alice Gaynor. The two-o'clock flight to Los Angeles—"

"I'm afraid that's impossible, Mr. Gaynor." The voice was puzzled but polite.

"It can't be impossible. All you have to do is announce it over the public-address system and—"

"Impossible, sir. The two-o'clock flight is just taking off at this moment. I'm terribly sorry. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"No," Roy said flatly, and put the phone down. He sat on the edge of his bed for a moment, then got up and went to the window. He looked out at the bright sky and the green-and-yellow mountains. He remained standing there, staring at the mountains, waiting for the call from the airline. —IRWIN SHAW

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DOG HOUSE, 2 rooms, insulated with siding. 1911 E. Norwich.—*Adv. in the Milwaukee Journal.*

Taken long ago, we presume?

THE NIGHT THE OLD NOSTALGIA BURNED DOWN

MY OWN NEW YORK CHILDHOOD

WHEN I was a boy, Fourteenth Street was where Twenty-third Street is now, and Samuel J. Tilden and I used to play marbles on the lot where the Grand Opera House still stood. Governor Lovelace brought the first marble from England to this country on August 17, 1668, and gave it to my Great-Aunt Amelia van Santvoort, of whom he was enamored. She had several copies made, and Sam Tilden and I used to amuse ourselves with them.

I remember the Sunday afternoons when Governor Lovelace would come to tea at our house, although I could not have been much more than a tad at the time. I can hear the rich clanking of the silver harness as his magnificent equipage, with its twelve ebony outriders in cerise bombazine, rolled up to our house at No. 239 East 174th Street. I was the envy of all the kids on the block because I was allowed to sit in the carriage while the Governor went in to take tea with Great-Aunt Amelia. I always chose Ada Rehan to sit beside me. She was a little golden-haired thing at the time and none of us dreamed she would one day go out from East 174th Street and shoot President Garfield.

Great-Aunt Amelia was a dowager of the old school. You don't see many of her kind around New York today, probably because the old school was torn down a good many years ago; its site is now occupied by Central Park. People used to say that the Queen, as they called Great-Aunt Amelia, looked more like my Aunt Theodosia than my Aunt Theodosia did.

But Aunt Caroline was really the great lady of our family. I can still see her descending the staircase, dressed for the opera in silk hat, satin-lined cape, immaculate shirt, white tie, and that magnificent, purple-black beard.

"Well, boy!" she would boom at me. "Well!"

"Well, Aunt Caroline!" I would say, doing my best to boom back at her.

She would chuckle and say, "Boy, I like your spirit! Tell Grimson I said to add an extra tot of brandy to your bedtime milk."

OH, those lollipops at Preem's, just around the corner from the corner! Mm-m-m, I can still taste them! After school, we kids would rush home and shout, "Ma, gimme a penny for a lollipop at Preem's, willya, Ma? Hey, Ma, willya?" Then we would go tease Jake Astor, the second-hand-fur dealer around the corner. I shall never forget the day Minnie Maddern Fiske swiped the mink pelt from Jake's cart and stuffed it under Bishop Potter's cope.

Miss Hattie Pumplebutt was our teacher at P. S. 67. She was a demure wisp of a woman, with white hair parted in the middle, pince-nez that were forever dropping off her nose, always some lacy collar high around her throat, and paper cuffs. We adored her. Every once in a while she would climb up on her desk, flap her arms, shout "Whee-e-e! I'm a bobolink!," and start crowing. Or she would take off suddenly and go skipping about the tops of our desks with a dexterity and sure-footedness truly marvellous in one of her age. When we grew old enough, we were told about Miss Pumplebutt. She took dope. Well, she made history and geography far more interesting than a lot of non-sniffing teachers I have known.

One day, Jim Fisk and I played hooky from school and went to the old Haymarket on Sixth Avenue, which was then between Fifth and Seventh. We had two beers apiece and thought we were quite men about town. I dared Jim to go over and shoot Stanford White, never dreaming the chump would do it. I didn't know he was loaded. I got Hail Columbia from Father for that escapade.

EXIT
STEINBERG

FATHER was very strict about the aristocratic old New York ritual of the Saturday-night bath. Every Saturday night at eight sharp we would line up: Father, Mother, Diamond Jim Brady; Mrs. Dalrymple, the housekeeper; Absentweather, the butler; Aggie, the second girl; Aggie, the third girl; Aggie, the fourth girl; and twelve of us youngsters, each one equipped with soap and a towel. At a command from Father, we would leave our mansion on East Thirtieth Street and proceed solemnly up Fifth Avenue in single file to the old reservoir, keeping a sharp eye out for Indians. Then, at a signal from Papa, in we'd go. Everyone who was anyone in New York in those days had his Saturday-night bath in the reservoir, and it was there that I first saw and fell in love with the little girl whom I later made Duchess of Marlborough.

My Grandmamma Satterthwaite was a remarkable old lady. At the age of eighty-seven she could skip rope four hundred and twenty-two consecutive times without stopping, and every boy on the block was madly in love with her. Then her father failed in the crash of '87 and in no time she was out of pigtails, had her hair up, and was quite the young lady. I never did hear what became of her.

IT rather amuses me to hear the youngsters of today enthusing about the croissants, etc., at Spodetti's and the other fashionable Fifth Avenue patisseries. Why, they aren't a patch on Horan's!

Mike Horan's place was at Minetta Lane and Washington Mews, and I clearly remember my father telling a somewhat startled Walt Whitman that old Mike Horan could bend a banana in two—with his bare hands! But I never saw him do it. We kids used to stand in front of his shop for hours after school waiting for Mike to bend a banana, but he never did. I can still hear the cheerful clang of his hammer on the anvil and the acrid smell of burning hoofs from the Loveland Dance Palace, across the way on Delancey Street, which was then Grand. Then the Civil War came and the property of the Loyalists was confiscated. I still have some old Loyalist property I confiscated on that occasion. I use it for a paperweight. Old Gammer Wilberforce was a Loyalist. We used to chase her down the street, shouting "Tory!" at her. Then she would chase us up the street, shouting:

"Blaine, Blaine, James G. Blaine!
Continental liar from the State of Maine!"

OF course, very few white people ever went to Chinatown in those days. It was not until the Honorah Totweiler case that people became aware of Chinatown. I venture to say that few persons today would recall Honorah Totweiler, yet in 1832 the Honorah Totweiler case was the sensation of the country. In one day the circulation of the elder James Gordon Bennett jumped seventy-four thousand as a result of the Totweiler case.

One sunny afternoon in the autumn of September 23, 1832, a lovely and innocent girl, twelfth of eighteen daughters of Isaac Totweiler, a mercer, and Sapphira, his wife, set out from her home in Washington Mews to return a cup of sugar—but let the elder Bennett tell the story:

> It is high time [Bennett wrote] that the people of these United States were awakened to the menace in which the old liberties for which our forefathers fought and bled, in buff and blue, by day and night, at Lexington and Concord, in '75 and '76, have been placed as a result of the waste, the orgy of spending, the deliberate falsifications, the betrayal of public trust, and the attempt to set up a bureaucratic and unconstitutional dictatorship, of the current Administration in Washington. Murphy must go, and Tammany with him!

AFTER dinner on Sundays, my Grandpa Bemis would take a nap, with the *Times*, or Grandmamma, or something, thrown over his face to keep out the glare. If he was in a good humor when he awoke, he would take us youngsters up to Dick Canfield's to play games, but as he was never in a good humor when he awoke, we never went to Dick Canfield's to play games.

Sometimes, when we kids came home from school, Mrs. Rossiter, the housekeeper, would meet us in the hall and place a warning finger on her lips. We knew what that meant. We must be on our good behavior. The dowager Mrs. Murgatroyd was calling on Mother. We would be ushered into the Presence, Mother would tell us to stop using our sleeves as a handkerchief, and then Mrs. Murgatroyd would laugh and say, "Oh, Annie, let the poor children alone. Sure, you're only young once." Then she would lift up her skirt to the knee, fish out a huge wallet from under her stocking, and give us each $2,000,000. We loved her. Not only did she have a pair of d——d shapely stems for an old lady her age, but she was reputed to be able to carry six schooners of beer in each hand.

I shall never forget the night of the fire. It was about three o'clock in the morning when it started, in an old distaff factory on West Twelfth Street. I was awakened by the crackling. I shivered, for my brother, as usual, had all the bedclothes, and there I was, with fully three inches of snow (one inch powder, two inches crust) on my bare back. The next morning there were seven feet of snow on West Twenty-seventh Street alone. You don't get that sort of winter nowadays. That was the winter the elder John D. Rockefeller was frozen over solid from November to May.

ON Saturdays we used to go with Great-Aunt Tib to the Eden Musee to see the wax figure of Lillian Russell. There was a woman! They don't build girls like her nowadays. You can't get the material, and even if you could, the contractors and the plumbers would gyp you and substitute shoddy.

I was six when the riots occurred. No, I was *thirty*-six. I remember because it was the year of the famous Horace Greeley hoax, and I used to hear my parents laughing about it. It was commonly believed that Mark Twain was the perpetrator of the hoax, although Charles A. Dana insisted to his dying day that it was Lawrence Godkin. At any rate, the hoax, or "sell," originated one night at the Union League Club when Horace chanced to remark to Boss Tweed that his (Horace's) wife was entertaining that night. The town was agog for days, no one having the faintest notion that the story was not on the level. Greeley even threatened Berry Wall with a libel suit.

WELL, that was New York, the old New York, the New York of gaslit streets, and sparrows (and, of course, horses), and cobblestones. The newsboy rolled the *Youth's Companion* into a missile and threw it on your front stoop and the postmen wore uniforms of pink velvet and made a point of bringing everybody a letter every day.

Eheu, fugaces!—Frank Sullivan

ACADEMIC ROLL CALL

PEDANT

On campuses remote and shaded
You find the pedant,
Dry and faded,
Who, once mistaking books
For bread,
By incunabula is fed.
His mind is recondite
But tidy,
Arranged for Monday's class through Friday,
With data
Learnèd and congealed
On the minutiae of his field.
An academic look has he.
Dear God,
Preserve the faculty!

PRIMA DONNA

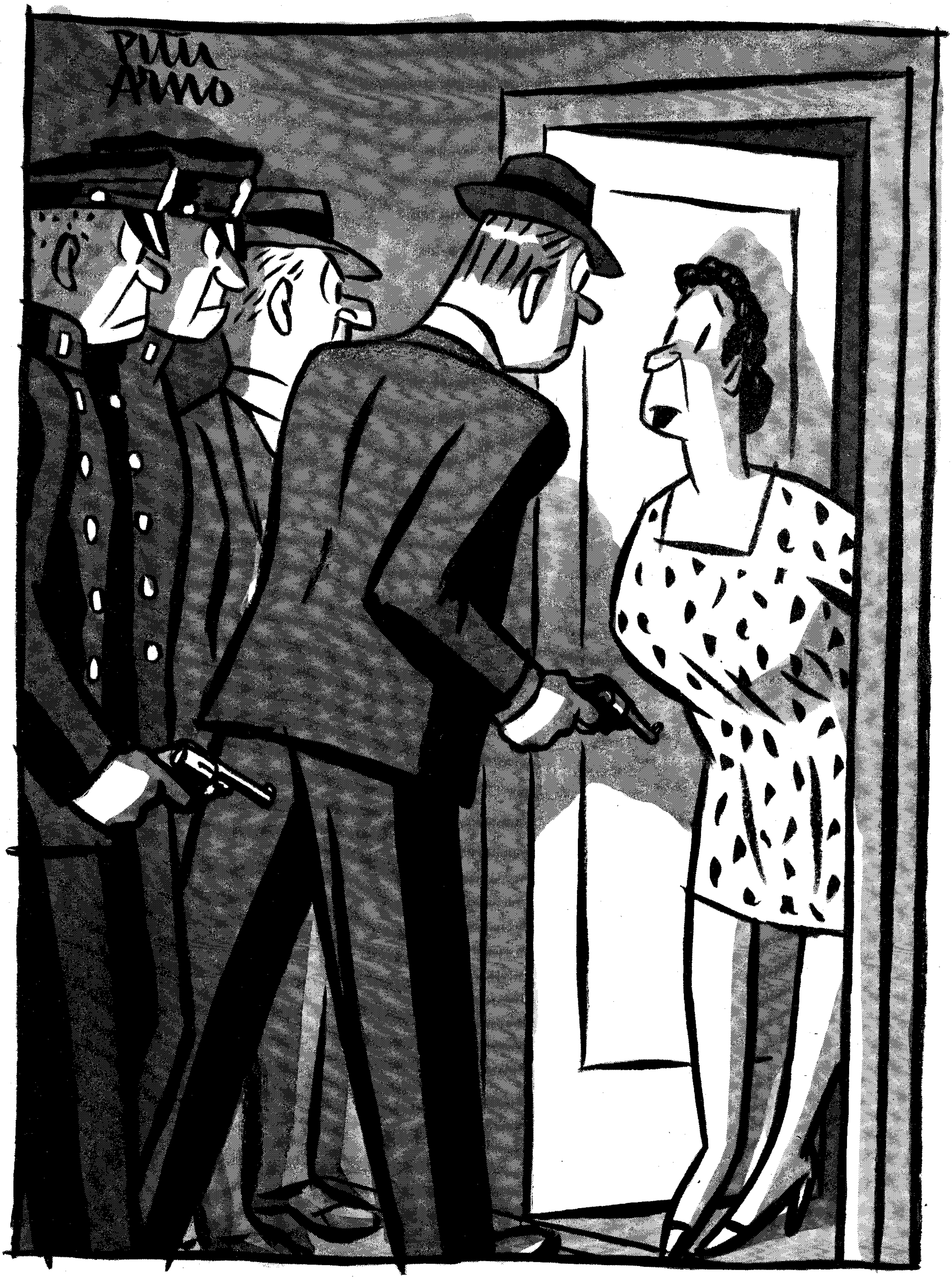
He scintillates.
He gives off sparks
And some say perfume. His remarks
Bring students tumbling to his classes,
Inebriate and dazed
In masses,
To hear with laudable emotion—
But what
Nobody has a notion.
So fine a turn deserves a stage
And proper fame
(And better wage).

STUFFED SHIRT

Pomposity upon a seat
Of learning
Gives a solemn bleat,
Confers with God,
Consults a note,
And elegantly clears his throat
To mouth, with piety, what chance
Nugget
Has least significance.
Yet words of wisdom,
Love, or wit
He would make dull and exquisite.

TEACHER

He rides no hobbyhorse,
No wreath
Of laurel does he trot beneath,
One of the passionate
Few, the kind
Of scholar
With a humble mind
Who, lacking histrionic bent,
Communicates
Enlightenment,
Not dusty answers from a shelf.
He teaches who has taught himself,
Who saw a star
And hitched his cart.
With him gay companies depart,
And by this little stratagem
He makes stargazers
Out of them. —Helen Bevington



"I hate to think of waking him. He didn't get in till all hours."

PROFILES

PLAYWRIGHT

I—AH, BUDAPEST!

Ferenc Molnar

IF you happened to visit New York in the winter of 1908 (or even if you lived here), you could scarcely avoid seeing "The Devil," a play by the Hungarian playwright Ferenc Molnar. Probably for the first time in the history of the New York theatre, four companies were simultaneously performing one play. Two of the productions were in English, one was in German, and one was in Yiddish. In one of the English versions, produced by Henry W. Savage at the Garden, the fascinating Devil was played by Edwin Stevens; in the other, produced by Harrison Grey Fiske at the Belasco, the part was played by George Arliss. *Judge* came out with a cover that showed Mephisto, perched on a rock, leering down on a New York street solidly made up of theatres, all of which were playing "The Devil." A caption recorded Pluto's satisfaction with what Molnar had done for him: "I seem to be quite popular." The Devil was so popular, not only in New York but throughout the United States, that producers complained it was impossible to get leading men anywhere; they were all away somewhere or other playing Dr. Miller, which was the pseudonym affected in the play by the distinguished visitor from below. There was also a grievous shortage in opera capes and silk hats, for Dr. Miller was a formal dresser.

In the thirty-seven years that have passed since these multitudinous productions of "The Devil," seventeen other Molnar plays have been produced in New York, a record few American playwrights can claim. In 1914, David Belasco put on "The Phantom Rival," with Leo Ditrichstein, and it was extremely successful. In 1921, the Theatre Guild, then just getting started, took a leap into the unknown and produced his most famous play, "Liliom." A quarter of a century later, the Guild is presenting it again—expatriated to Massachusetts—as "Carousel," with music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. "The Guardsman," a later Molnar play, was the first production of the Theatre Guild that made real money. In it the Lunts acted together for the first time and had their first major success, and they chose it for their first and only film. During the next several years, Gilbert Miller put on three Molnar works—"The Play's the Thing," with Holbrook Blinn; "The Swan," with Eva Le Gallienne; and "The Good Fairy," with Helen Hayes and Walter Connolly—and all three were very successful. At the moment, three theatres in Budapest are playing Molnar—"The Swan," "The Play's the Thing," and a bill of one-acters. "Liliom" and "The Play's the Thing" are also current in Vienna. Of contemporary playwrights, only Shaw, Maugham, and O'Neill, it would appear, have shown a comparable durability.

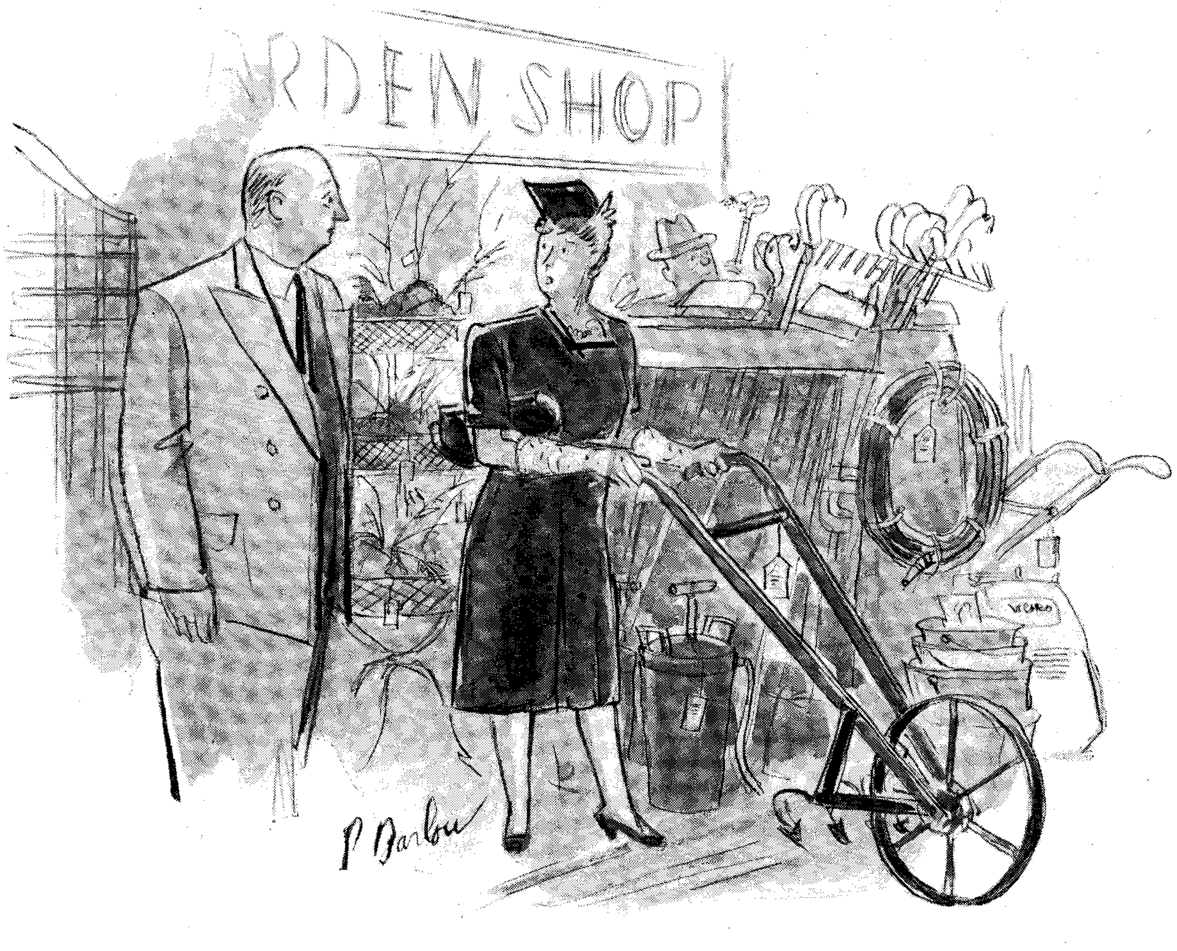
MOLNAR, who has been living at the Plaza ever since he arrived in this country in January, 1940, was born in Budapest on January 12, 1878, of a Jewish family named Neumann. His change of name was not an assimilationist caprice, nor was it akin to the naïve aspiration which in Boston animates the Kabatznicks to assume the dubious protective coloration of Cabot. The shift from Neumann to Molnar was a gesture of patriotic assertion rather than of escape. Until late in the eighteenth century, Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire were not permitted to dignify themselves with surnames. Then Emperor Josef II, in a burst of tolerance, made the pronouncement that they could wear swords and have surnames, provided that these were German and were approved by the officials. Hungary struggled against the process of Germanization until well into the nineteenth century, and even before 1867, when a decree making German the official language was revoked, a revolution took place in the nomenclature of the Hungarian Jews, whose abruptly acquired family names were often the coarse inventions of grossly comical German officials. In some cases the imposed names were scatological, in others merely ribald. Molnar's family had escaped the elephantine vagaries of official German humor, but he himself felt that he could not write under any German name whatever; he felt it would be unfair to Hungarian literature. Almost every Jewish doctor, lawyer, and businessman had somewhat the same feeling. "Molnar" is Hungarian for "Miller;" this was the profession of his favorite uncle, and he took the name over. It was a fling at nationalism.

In a preface to one edition of his collected plays, Molnar wrote a capsule biography of himself up to 1925:

> 1878, I was born in Budapest; 1896, I became a law student at Geneva; 1896, I became a journalist in Budapest; 1897, I wrote a short story; 1900, I wrote a novel; 1902, I became a playwright at home; 1908, I became a playwright abroad; 1914, I became a war correspondent; 1916, I became a playwright once more; 1918, my hair turned snow-white; 1925, I should like to be a law student at Geneva once more.

Molnar's father was a fairly successful physician, and the son's earliest memories are of people sitting in the Doctor's darkish waiting room. The whole household atmosphere was gloomy, and the boy, to liven things up, often played practical jokes on the patients. There is the legend that one of these jokes was so vivid that it quite literally scared his grandmother to death. (Probably this is the malicious invention of someone who suffered from his practical jokes in after years. According to Molnar, his grandmother merely broke a leg.) Except for whatever excitement of this sort he was able to whip up, the first five years of his life seem to have been, as he puts it, a "hiatus." In quick succession, for the next thirteen years, he attended a number of schools in Budapest, ending his local scholastic career at the Royal Hungarian University of Sciences, where, he recalls, he got into the habit of going to the Central Café, a local Mermaid Tavern, to do his homework. There he laid the foundation for that capacity to concentrate in cafés which later made it possible for him to toss off "Liliom" at a marbletopped table in one of the town's most populous restaurants, to the music of a military band. At the Royal University he studied law, concentrating on its criminal branches, and wrote a disquisition on criminal law and criminal statistics that appeared in *Pesti Hirlap*, a Hungarian political paper. He leavened these solemn activities by composing stories and light verse for a humorous paper.

In 1896, when he was eighteen, Molnar decided to devote more of his time to journalism. He presented himself at the editorial offices of *Pesti Hirlap*, where he was told that the managing editor was away hunting. On subsequent visits, he got the same story. This hunting trip lasted fourteen years; Molnar didn't meet the editor until 1910. When he did, however, he got a job. In the meantime, piqued by the prolonged absence of the tireless huntsman, he decided to tackle plays. His first major dramatic effort, "The Blue Cave," had been successfully produced when he was fourteen—on a stage he constructed himself at a cost of eight florins—in the basement of a friend's home. There was a lot in this play about alchemy, and the props were mostly blue bottles filched from his father's office. The play must have been controversial, for the performance ended in a riot. Molnar had to wait ten years for his next production. This was a farce called, not too surprisingly, "The Lawyer." It was produced at the Gaiety Theatre, in Budapest, in 1902. Only the other day, forty-four years later, Molnar sold the film rights of "The Lawyer" to R.K.O. An incident of this sort brings to mind Shaw's advice to young dramatists. "Don't go in for Hollywood or radio or anything else," he adjures them. "The money you earn by these sidelines will vanish. The earnings from your old plays will support you in your old age." At the moment, Molnar is drawing six hundred dollars a week from "Carousel" alone, and occasional film sales of old works keep the wolf still farther away from the lobby of the Plaza.



"Do you have a mirror?"

Molnar never practiced law, though he went to Geneva, after he had finished with the Royal University, to continue his legal studies. In Geneva, he tried his hand at feuilletons and correspondence for the Budapest papers, and his material caught on so well that he definitely decided to give up the law. To the intense unhappiness of his family, he abandoned his studies, returned to Budapest, and set himself up as a full-time journalist. It was as a journalist, not as a dramatist, that Molnar won his first distinction; he was the leading newspaperman of Hungary from the beginning of the century to the end of the first World War. His plays were a byproduct of his newspaper work. For a time, in *Pesti Hirlap*, he wrote a column—its name can be loosely translated as "Miscellaneous Chronicles"—which thoroughly delighted the town. It did not deal in celebrities, as most of our columns do now; it dwelt upon the caprices and currents of life, as fiction does. Many of the columns were overheard, or imagined, dialogues. One of these dialogues was a conversation between two servant girls about their men. Molnar used this dialogue again in writing the story of Julie and Marie in "Liliom." In fact, it was the nucleus of the play. "Jozsi," an earlier play, was also a dramatization of one of his newspaper sketches.

Molnar was very handsome in those days, and very witty. It has been said of him, as it has been said of Oscar Wilde, that his real genius is revealed in his conversation. A serious-minded friend of this period regrets that Molnar was so lavish in social extemporization. "Had he written it down instead of talking it away in all-night carousals," the man recently said, "we should have had volumes of brilliant humor." Molnar speaks French, German, and Italian fluently, as well as his native tongue, but when he arrived here in 1940 he knew little English. One night soon afterward he went to a dinner party in New York at which most of the guests, Broadway people, spoke only English. He felt painfully out of things. On the way home, he said to a compatriot, "You know, I used to dominate occasions like this one. It is terrible to have no English. True, I have learned to say quite well 'Where is my hat?,' but it does not seem to excite people." He now speaks a cultivated and easy English, and, surrounded by dictionaries in his room at the Plaza, is experiencing the adventure of writing a play in his most recently adopted language.

IN 1896, when Molnar celebrated his eighteenth birthday, his native city celebrated its thousandth. It had a culture all its own. In those days, everybody in Budapest wrote, painted, or composed music. Entering a café one day, Molnar observed a gentleman at a table who was deep in a book. "There sits the greatest reader in Hungary," Molnar said. "In fact, I am not sure he is not the *only* reader in Hungary." In spite of its antiquity, its glitter, its winy gaiety, Budapest was a provincial capital. None of the city's enormous output of literature was exported. The true Austro-Hungarian capital was Vienna, a five-hour journey from Budapest. The German-language writers and playwrights of Vienna were well known in Budapest, but none of the authors of Budapest had broken into the charmed circle of Franz Josef's city. Not one Hungarian play had been seen by the theatregoers of Rome, Paris, or New York. Molnar changed all that. In 1907, he wrote "The Devil," and it was such a success in Budapest that it was soon translated into every major language and played the world over. Thereafter, Hungarian plays were in. Molnar's plays became Hungary's principal export, and a large demand developed for the work of his colleagues. (It is said that when, during the last war, the Russians bombed Budapest, they destroyed two playwriting factories.) The stir in Budapest when first it was realized that Molnar was an international success was enormous.

Richard Decker

"Yes, dear. . . . No, dear. . . . Yes, yes, I will, dear."

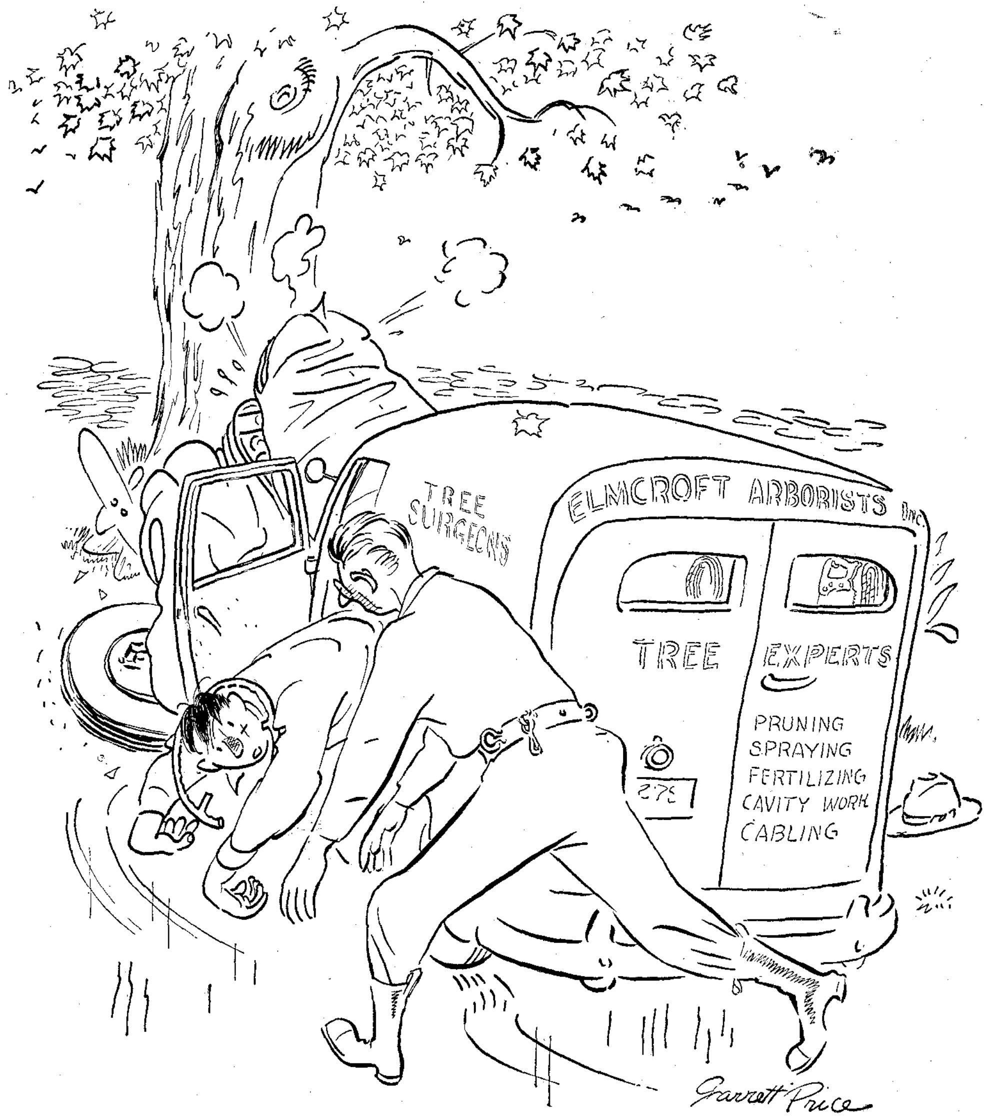
Nevertheless, Molnar stuck to his newspaper work. He had by that time written novels, sketches, and short stories, but it did not occur to him to give up his profession. Molnar's fame as a playwright later outdid his reputation as a novelist, but, like Maugham, he has practiced both crafts all his life. In between "The Hungry City," a bitterly satiric novel on Budapest corruption, published in 1901, and his most recent work, "Farewell, My Heart," written in New York and published by Simon & Schuster in 1945, Molnar wrote many novels. Of them all, "The Paul Street Boys," a story of juvenile gang warfare, is considered by most Central Europeans his masterpiece. His own choice is "The Green Hussar," the tragic love story of a chorus girl.

There does not appear to have existed, in the Budapest of that time, any line of demarcation between journalism and what is nowadays loosely called "creative work." All the novelists, playwrights, poets, and short-story writers were working for newspapers or magazines; journalism was their mainstay, and they did not feel that what they did for their employers was on a lower plane than their other work. Molnar even now calls himself a journalist. While he was still a practicing newspaperman, he once set down the following view of his calling:

> Reporters in America and elsewhere go out and get the news, whereas we more often than not stay in the office or in our garrets and make the "news." By that I mean that we report the news of the mind and soul of our characters as much as we do the actions and happenings of daily life, which are, after all, the material accidents of existence rather than the significant realities of life. But some of it, I insist, is literature. True literature is life translated into letters.

By this definition, of course, "Swann's Way" and "The Brothers Karamazov" make pretty good journalism.

Not long after "The Devil" became a success, Molnar found himself the head of an informal organization known as Molnar's Gang. On one of the boulevards of Budapest, the New York Life Insurance Company had built a grandiose five-story *Wolkenkratzer*, or skyscraper. Not long afterward a restaurateur leased the ground floor and basement and called his place the New York Café. The opening of this café was something of an occasion. Molnar was given the key to the front door by the owner and, escorted by his Gang, he proceeded to the Danube and ceremonially threw it in



"Never mind me, Tom. Take care of that maple."

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the river, as a fairly intricate way of saying that the café would never shut its door. In the memories of its patrons, the New York Café was a fabulous establishment. It had marble columns, terraces, and bars. It had lunch rooms where the poor could sip a glass of beer and munch a roll, and dining rooms for those who wanted luxury. It had rooms with dance orchestras and rooms without dance orchestras. Because Molnar's Gang made its headquarters there, the group was known alternatively as the New York Crowd. For a newcomer with artistic ambitions to be invited to sit at Molnar's table in the New York Café was an accolade, a kind of decoration. Molnar's disapproval of a play or book or piece of music could have a serious effect on its career; his saying that a young man was talented got the young man a hearing. The New York Crowd was made up of a dozen or so of the city's most celebrated men—composers, painters, and sculptors, as well as novelists and playwrights. There was only one requisite for membership in the Crowd—talent. Molnar himself plays several instruments well, and in his youth he wrote, along with everything else, some songs and lyrics. Among his musical protégés were Viktor Jacobi, the composer, and Dr. Albert Sirmay, now the musical editor of Chappell & Company. The group travelled everywhere together. They went to dress rehearsals and first nights in a body and then repaired to the New York Café for the post-mortems.

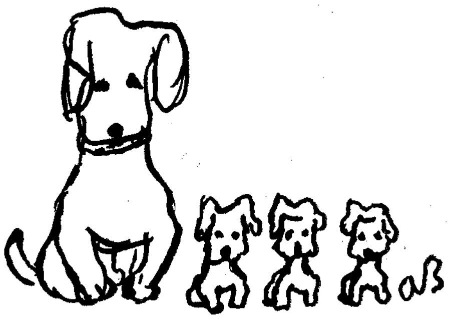
One member of Molnar's Gang, now distinguished in musical circles in New York, was astonished when he discovered that Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II have an office. In Budapest you worked at home, and when you had business to transact you went to one of the cafés. Each theatre had a café that was considered its own, across the street or around the corner, and when you wanted to see the manager or the director, you could be certain—unless, regrettably, he had died during the night—that he'd be in that café every afternoon. The café took care of everything: you could plan a production there, do your casting, and even, as Molnar sometimes did, write your play there; if you needed money, you could get an advance against royalties from the café manager or, if he was evasive, borrow from the headwaiter. The café headwaiters were important and apparently lavish personages. The most famous and the most lucrative was Uncle John, of the New York Café. His loans over the years to the less lucky customers took on the aspect of an annuity, appropriate to the actuarial setting. After Molnar became prosperous, Uncle John would say to him delicately, before delivering the change from a large note, "Anything on account?" Molnar would tell him how much, and the headwaiter would presumably allocate the amount to the liquidation of forgotten debts. This went on for several years. Finally, Molnar decided it was time to stop. "You've been collecting from me for several years," he said when Uncle John made his usual request. "Surely I didn't borrow as much as that from you!" Uncle John grew purple in the face; he began to shout at Molnar. "And what about all those who *can't* pay?" he demanded.

TO many of the survivors of the era of the New York Crowd, a considerable number of whom are now in this country, Budapest still seems a little paradise. There are dissidents who say that the town was all right for those who could escape into the literary and theatrical Bohemia but that it had another side. There is an actress who, although not Jewish herself, was upset, when she was a girl, by the lurid anti-Semitic posters she saw on her way to school. She also remembers going on a picnic in the lovely countryside along the Danube and being shown a wood where, her companion told her, with a great longing for the return of the good old days, a considerable group of Jews had once been taken out and shot in inexact reprisal for the Communist uprising, headed by the Jewish revolutionist Bela Kun, just after the first World War. Some members of the Molnar Gang, including its leader, were conscious of these undercurrents. Threaded through many of Molnar's plays is a light, Heinesque awareness of this lurking enmity. He himself was, however, immune from persecution, and so were his friends. Immersion in the arts washed them with a shimmer of inviolability, even of honor. In 1908, official Hungary gave Molnar recognition by making him a member of the Petofi Society, a kind of national academy of arts and letters. The head of the Hungarian Democratic Party was Molnar's closest friend, and if Molnar had had serious political aspirations, he probably could have done very well. He was, in fact, actually elected a Democratic member of the City Council of Budapest, but although he attended a number of sessions, he never made a speech. "He is not a fighter," a more militant contemporary has said of him.

Those who remember the Budapest of the golden days remember not only the city but their youth as well, and this may easily heighten the town's glamour in retrospect. Just the same, life there was once beguiling, and it afforded one amenity of undeniable worth that unfortunately has never taken root elsewhere. This was the system of the Red Caps. The Budapest Red Caps did not carry baggage; they were uniformed messengers who did miscellaneous errands. They had beats and favorite corners all over the city. If you found yourself unable to pay your bill at a café and your credit with the headwaiter was overextended, you simply called the Red Cap on the corner and had him take your watch to a pawn shop. If you wanted to borrow money without security, you sent him with a note to whomever you wanted to touch. Lazy borrowers devised a time-saving system: they wrote one letter and addressed envelopes to five or six prospects. The Red Cap was instructed to deliver the letter first to the most likely. If it met with a rejection, he was to recover the letter, put it in the envelope addressed to the second-best bet, and go there, and so on until the loan was forthcoming or the list was exhausted. The Red Caps made it possible to converse in cafés with continuity even if you were insolvent.

The Red Caps were used for a hundred things. They were hired to wake up people who had slept through an appointment or to wake oneself up. There is a story of a theatre manager who sent theatrical-page items every day by a Red Cap to a newspaper editor who hated him. The editor would invariably take the material from the Red Cap and ostentatiously throw it into the wastebasket. After a while, the Red Cap would just bring in the dispatches, bow to the editor, and throw them into the wastebasket himself. Once Molnar, dissatisfied with some goulash in a little restaurant he frequented, sent a Red Cap to a rival restaurant for a goulash and ate it before the stricken gaze of the proprietor. The oldest and most cherished, if not the sturdiest, Red Cap was naturally stationed near the New York Café. He was ancient, white-bearded, arthritic, and given to procrastination. Nevertheless, he bore gallantly on the visor of his cap the legend "EXPRESS." One of these messengers was Molnar's prototype for Wolf Beifeld, whom the servant girl Marie falls in love with in "Liliom," mistaking him for a soldier because of his uniform.

Molnar wrote "Liliom" in Siberia. Siberia was a name given to one of the terraces in the New York Café because it was patronized by Hungarian dancers who came home broke after touring Russia. It was a custom of Budapest managers to send companies of dancers to Russia. Some of the dancing girls were successful, stayed in Russia, and married noblemen. The Czar's government was strict with the less accomplished ones. If they failed as dancers, they were not allowed to remain and improvise. The unfortunates who returned made at once for Siberia. Molnar, himself an inveterate fancier of far-off places and with an inborn hatred of the minutiae of actual travel, came to love Siberia. He arrived there one evening at his usual time, settled himself at his usual table, and ordered an expansive dinner, after which, with the café's military band going full swing in the background, he began "Liliom." He wrote till dawn. After three weeks of exile, the play was finished. It opened in Budapest, on September 5, 1909, and failed. Molnar was by now married to his first wife. She had furnished for him an ideal writing room, with a polished mahogany desk, silver inkwells, and comfortable armchairs. Somehow, Molnar found himself not using this room to work in. It was too lonesome and it had no military band. When "Liliom" failed, Mrs. Molnar was angry but triumphant. "This is what comes of not working at home," she said. Then she reproached him for having written such trash and extracted from him a promise that he would never compound the offense. Years later, after the Theatre Guild success with "Liliom" and a general reversal of opinion about the play, Molnar recalled this vow. "It is about the only promise I ever made to a woman that I fully kept," he said.



MOLNAR's first wife was the daughter of Jozsef Veszi, a local newspaper publisher. This man was a great figure in the town, cultivated and gay, who kept open house and seems to have attracted and stimulated everybody who had anything to do with him. Molnar, like everyone else, loved going to his house, and he had an adoring affection for his future father-in-law. There were wonderful dinners and literary and musical parties. The man had four daughters, so Molnar married one. Possibly owing to her insistent critical faculty, the marriage did not last. There is a point, with a writer, at which candor may be excessive. They had one daughter, Molnar's only child, who is now a widow and lives with her two sons and a daughter in Budapest.

Probably because of his lighter plays, there is an atmosphere about Molnar which conveys the impression that he has had a multiplicity of wives, but he has had only three, and he is still married to the third, the actress Lili Darvas. Molnar's second wife was Sari Fedak. She was the greatest stage star of Hungary, equally brilliant in straight parts and in operetta. She was so famous at home that when Erno Rapee, the Hungarian conductor, came to America, he at first called himself Fedak, under the impression that this resplendent name would guarantee an easy success in New York. Mr. Rapee was grieved to find that the path to recognition here was somewhat more devious. After a highly publicized courtship of seven years, Molnar and Fedak, in 1922, married. This marriage celebrated the end rather than the beginning of their relationship; it has been described by a contemporary as a "farewell marriage." This seems to have been a peculiarly Budapestian form of leave-taking. It was on the occasion of this wedding that Molnar made one of his most frequently quoted remarks. When his friends came to escort him to the ceremony, they were shocked to find him wearing a gray business suit. When they upbraided him, he answered, "I dress only for premières."

By the time Molnar married Fedak, he was deeply involved emotionally elsewhere. There had appeared in

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Budapest a new young actress who, though only seventeen, had made a big hit in an inconsequential play. Her name was Lili Darvas. Everybody ran to Molnar to ask him to go to see her. He refused. He seemed to regard the new star as an intruder. Without seeing her, he predicted that her success would be only temporary, but instead it grew with each new play she appeared in. Molnar's friends assured him that Darvas was just the sort of actress he was writing for. Molnar's resentment grew. For a long time he refused to meet her. (Later, long after his hostility had ebbed, he explained to her. "It was your youth," he said. The emergence of a new star so young had made him aware that his own generation was growing old, that the next generation was pushing up.) The question of casting a part in a new Molnar play arose. Molnar had chosen for it an actress with whose husband, a jealous man, he had recently fought a token duel. Fedak refused to allow her to play the part and insisted that Darvas have it. Eventually, Molnar yielded. Within three years, Darvas and Molnar were married. This seems to have had the effect, for a time, of somewhat diluting their relationship. But it has survived the years and many plays and war and exile, and though Molnar and Darvas are living in separate establishments in New York, there is still a deep friendship between them. She is playing the Queen in the Maurice Evans "Hamlet," now on the road, and during its recent run here, when, on matinée days, there was too little time between performances to go to her own flat uptown, where she was living with her mother, she had dinner with Molnar in his favorite delicatessen, near the Plaza.

Molnar's parsimony is as legendary as his wit. His prodigality seems to be confined largely to conversation. When he was divorced from Fedak, he paid her thirty thousand dollars. Before he married her, they had given many elaborate parties, on which she spent a great deal of money. Molnar had a flat of his own, but the parties were given at Fedak's flat, an arrangement which suited Molnar admirably. The thirty thousand dollars was like the payment of a long-overdue bill at a restaurant. The parties at Fedak's are still remembered by those lucky enough to have been invited. One of the regular guests was the Mayor of Budapest, who played the piano far better than Jimmy Walker and who often accompanied the famous tenor Richard Tauber. There were other parties, too. One evening, in the home of a well-known politician and his wife, Tauber was singing and the Mayor was playing the piano. Molnar, carried away by the *Stimmung* of the moment, found himself absentmindedly embracing his hostess. In his free hand he held a lighted cigar. Her husband walked over to Molnar and spoke to him. His manner was severe and his tone unfriendly. "Mr. Molnar," he said, "may I see you alone?" Molnar followed him into another room. He felt miserable, for he is a man who hates all conflict that is not verbal. "This," he thought in Hungarian, "is it!" The husband closed the doors behind them, then faced him. "I must request you, Mr. Molnar," he said, "not to smoke while Herr Tauber is singing. It is bad for his throat." It was a music-loving atmosphere.

Not the least of the diversions at the Fedak parties were the occasional quarrels between Molnar and Fedak. Molnar gave her a large but uncelebrated painting, and occasionally, to counteract the calumny that he never gave anyone anything, he would proudly point it out to the guests. One night, after a sharp difference of opinion between him and Fedak, he had the picture taken down and removed to his own flat. Later it reappeared in Fedak's flat. During the course of the next few years, this painting made many trips back and forth. When people started gossiping about Molnar and Darvas before their marriage, the opinion was frequently expressed that this time it must be real love because, it was reported with stupefaction, "he spends money on Darvas!"

Molnar himself capitalizes anecdotally on the widespread legend of his stinginess. In 1927, on his return to Budapest after his first visit to America, where Darvas was by then playing in Max Reinhardt's repertory company at the Cosmopolitan Theatre, he was given a welcome-home dinner party. A former friend who had become an enemy managed to be invited. Molnar was in good form and told a number of stories about New York. One of them concerned the night Darvas had come home to their hotel weeping. Her purse, which had more than a hundred dollars in it, had been stolen out of her dressing room. To calm her, Molnar recounted, he had said, "Don't cry. I will give you the hundred dollars." Then, surveying the table through the monocle he has always worn, he caught the look of utter incredulity in the eyes of his estranged friend. "Don't be so startled," said Molnar. "I only promised it." Recently, in New York, someone asked him whether he was able to send anything to his daughter in Budapest. "Yes," he said. "In the beginning, I sent her money through Rumania, then through an American soldier who was going to Budapest, then through the Red Cross, but now I hear that 'all you have to do is go to the bank and just send. In fact," he added, his voice broken with factitious sobbing, "it's getting easier and easier and easier!" Molnar says that he finds a reputation for stinginess costly. When a man has a reputation for generosity, he believes, people are apt to say, "Well, he's so nice and kind and gives so much that I can't approach him." On the other hand, of a stingy man, they think, "He's so tight it will be a pleasure to nick him."

HUNGARY'S one reader must have been hard put to it to keep up just with Molnar's output. For some twenty years before the first World War, Molnar led an industrious life in his native city. The literary program to which he determinedly adhered was: a feuilleton or a short dialogue for the papers every day, a short story every week, and a play and a novel every year. His

Whitney Darrow, jr.

"Another strike! My goodness, I must be getting blind as a bat!"

Van Raalte

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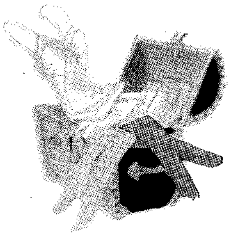

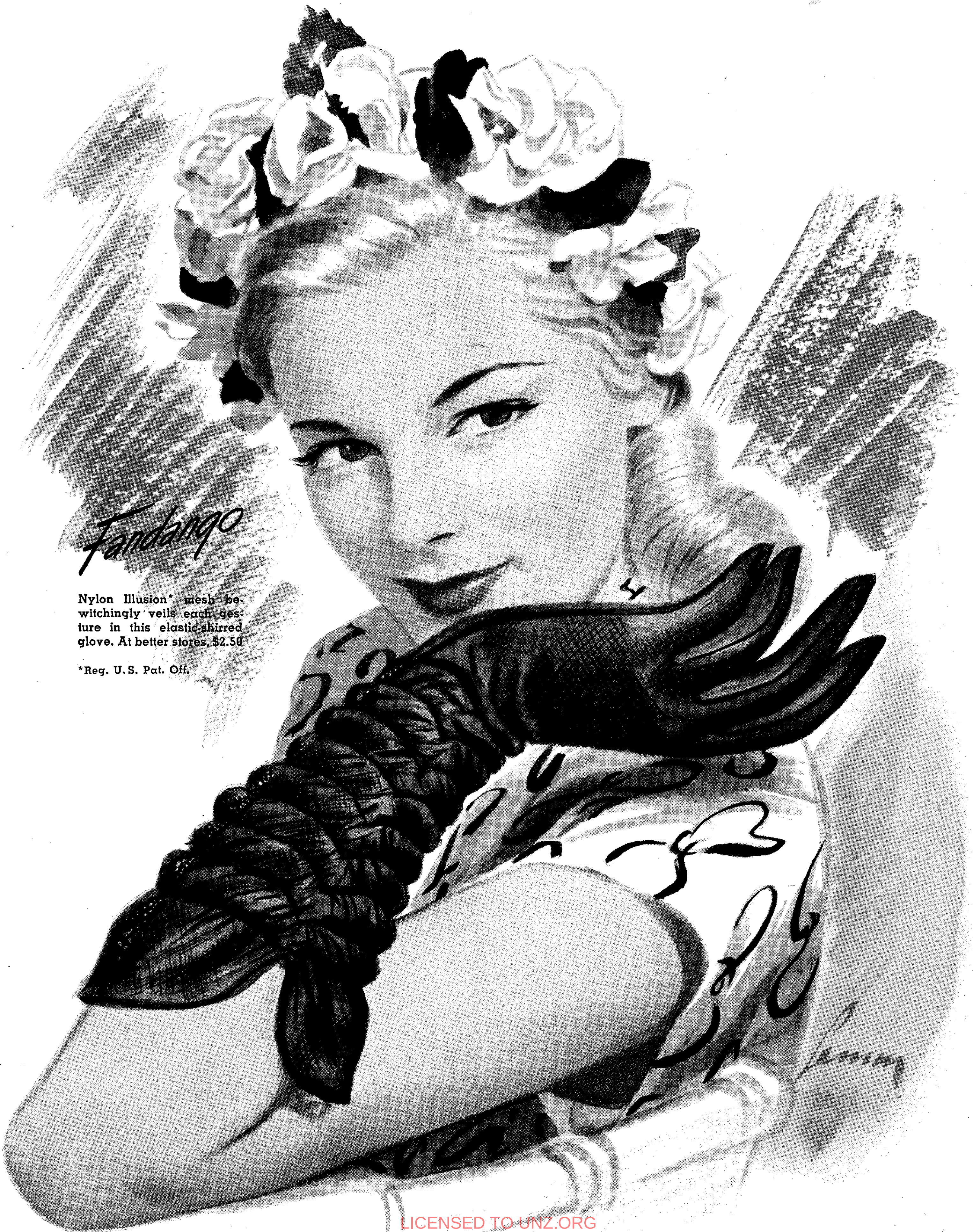

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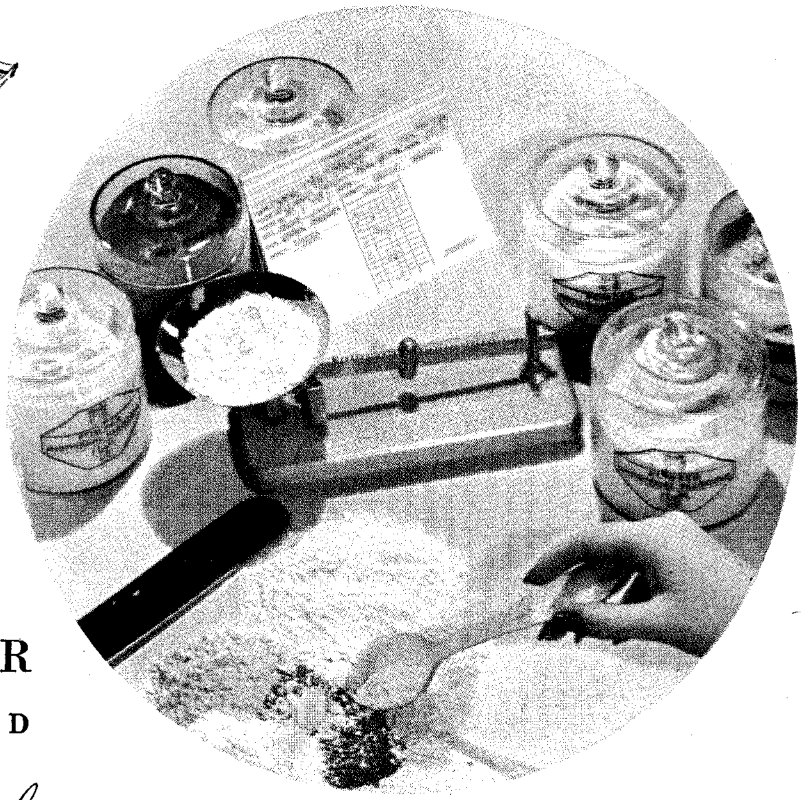

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NEW YORK PARIS LONDON MONTREAL

fame grew, but in those years travel, which was forced upon him later by the Nazis, was very unattractive to him; he would not stir out of his beloved capital. No one could budge him from it, though many tried. One day, a friend just returned from America met Molnar in a café and talked persuasively of the delights of New York. Molnar sighed and said it sounded wonderful.

"If it seems so wonderful to you, why on earth don't you go?" the friend asked. Molnar made a gesture to convey the fantastic improbability of such a journey.

"Is it that you dislike boats?" inquired the friend.

"No. Although I have never been on one, I rather like the idea of boats," Molnar said.

Emboldened, the travel agent pursued his advantage. "Is it that you are afraid of the Atlantic, like Grieg?" he asked.

No, Molnar had no special prejudice against the Atlantic.

"Are you afraid of seasickness?"

Mildly, perhaps, but Molnar might take a chance.

"Is it the rail journey to Le Havre or Villefranche that puts you off?"

Tiresome, perhaps, but with a hamper of books and brandy it might be managed.

"Why, then," his companion shouted triumphantly, "don't you just pack up and go to New York?"

Molnar ordered a brandy and came to grips with the situation. "All the stages of this journey I think I might accomplish," he said, "except the most hazardous of all—the one you have not mentioned."

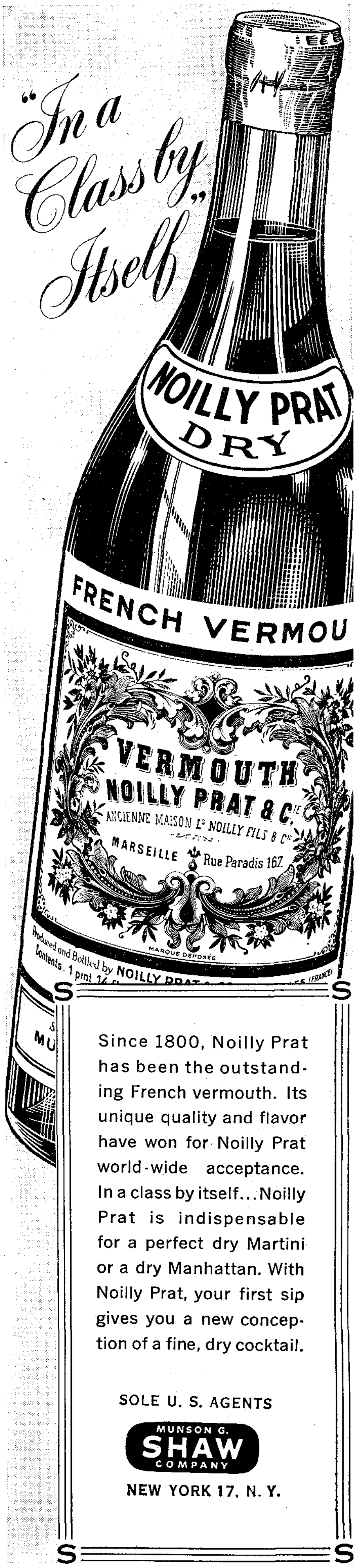
"What is that?" asked his friend.

"Getting from this terrace where I am sitting," said Molnar, "to the railway station in Budapest. That I cannot do. That, I feel, is beyond me."

Budapest had much of the intimacy of a small town. Molnar remembers having a political argument with a friend in his rooms on the second floor of an apartment house. The argument undoubtedly became noisy, because a passerby in the street who disagreed with one opinion came upstairs and joined in the argument. Another time, Molnar was going past Viktor Jacobi's house in a cab. He heard Jacobi playing the piano. Molnar asked the driver to stop the cab and listened carefully to the tune. Jacobi was working out a new melody. While playing cards with Jacobi in a café a few days later, Molnar started casually humming it. Jacobi went pale. "Where did you hear that tune?" he asked. "In Paris," said Molnar offhandedly. "It's quite a hit there." "Strange," Jacobi said. "I wrote it and thought it was original. I must have stolen it unconsciously."

Molnar's working habits were celebrated. He would not emerge from his rooms until early evening. Then he would stroll or ride to the New York Café, where he would dine and afterward sit till dawn, writing, conversing, drinking, and listening to the music. His courtship of Darvas made only a slight change in this routine. He would meet her after the play and take her to what would be her supper and his lunch. He would then escort her home and return to his Gang. In one of the public gardens along the Danube was a statue of Lajos Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot. It was considered improper in the New York Crowd to go home before the tiny bronze lettering at the foot of the statue was legible. There came a day when Molnar's rigorously nocturnal existence was interrupted; he was summoned to be a witness at a trial. It was borne in upon him that he had to appear in court at ten in the morning. Red Caps were mobilized to see that he got up in time, his friends bivouacked in his rooms as a further precaution, and, at nine-thirty on that grim morning, the still incredulous and foggy Molnar found himself in a carriage being driven through the streets of Budapest, unfamiliar in the unaccustomed light, to the courthouse. Molnar looked around. The streets, he discovered, were full of people bustling about at this insane hour. He was appalled. "Can it be," he asked, "that all these people are witnesses?"

DURING the first World War, Molnar was a war correspondent for the Budapest papers. Three volumes of his war correspondence were published, and as a result of his experiences the plays he wrote immediately afterward contained a good deal of tragedy. In the postwar period, the Molnar Gang began to dwindle and a rival gang began to form. The new one included a number of what one of Molnar's adherents described as "character enemies." It is a requirement of Molnar's nature that he constantly have on hand a pet enemy on whom to focus his lethal epigrams, and by systematically attacking people in rotation, he has been able, through the years, to build up a considerable body of opposition. Of a mediocre painter who



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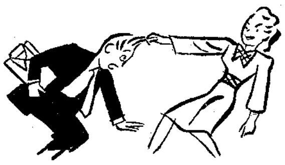


"Ow! Ow! No—I promised not to tell a soul where I found this Arrow Shirt!"

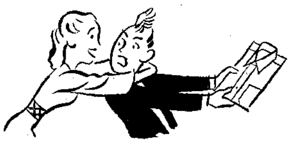
"Not even your loving wife, who wants one for her poor old pop? I suspect you just won't tell me because *you* want to be the only well-dressed man in the family—thanks to that Arrow Collar."

"Have a heart, hon, you're *killing* me! I *can't* tell you—"

"My, my—I hate vain men. Perhaps you want to be selfish and look neater than the other fellows when you bowl, eh? Well, I must admit that Mitoga figure-fit does things for you!"

"Please, sugar — *please* stop! Your strength is *frightening!*"

"Good! I'll teach you to keep a fine Arrow Sanforized shirt to yourself! A shirt that can't shrink even 1%! NOW will you tell me where you got it?"



"Look, Mrs. Bluebeard! I can't tell because I promised the Arrow dealer I wouldn't—shirts are *so scarce!* What's more, I bought this shirt for *your old man*—to curry a little favor! Apologies are now in order."

"O-oh, darling! Beat me! Slug me! But PLEASE forgive me!"

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was an inveterate and brilliantly successful gambler, Molnar said, "Yes, he's awfully good at the roulette table, but everything he makes at night he paints away in the daytime." The authorized translator of Bernard Shaw in Germany was Siegfried Trebitsch. "What have Bernard Shaw and Siegfried Trebitsch in common?" someone asked in a literary symposium. "Neither understands German," Molnar answered. To a magazine publisher who had accidentally dropped Molnar from his free list, Molnar wrote, "Let us get my relation with your magazine clearly established. If I am not on your free list, I see it too seldom, and if I am, I see it too often."

There was a diverting group in Budapest known as the "revolver journalists." These gentlemen had mastered an unusual variety of blackmail. They all published little papers, some of them no more than throwaways. Their method had a refreshing modesty. They attempted to hold up not the bosses of big business firms but their subordinates. The procedure was simple; one of them would print an effusive article about the chief clerk or the vice-president of an organization. The tenor of the article would be that the head of the firm was a mere figurehead, that the real brains of the organization was the subordinate. The journalist would call upon the selected victim and show him the article, then ask him to subscribe for so many copies. The man would be horrified, especially if the praise was justified. "You can't print this," he would say. "It will cost me my job!" He would have to pay heavily to suppress the rave notice. A gentleman named Schweiger, one of the best-known practitioners of this art of extraction by loud praise, encountered Molnar when he was taking the cure in Karlsbad. Evidently Schweiger had run out of superlatives, for he asked Molnar for a loan. Without saying anything, Molnar threw him twenty pengos, which was less than five dollars. Schweiger was hurt. "From a Molnar, twenty pengos?" he said. "No," Molnar said. "To a Schweiger, twenty pengos!"

One of Molnar's intimates was once asked whether Molnar was not his enemy. "No," the man replied. "Just now Molnar has Feleki, but he's got an option on me for October." Of this Feleki, a well-known, startlingly thin journalist, Molnar one day remarked pleasantly that when he was born, the nurse threw the child away but kept the umbilical cord. Feleki resented this description, and the feud between them was prolonged and bitter. A reconciliation was finally arranged; Feleki was to be brought by mediators to the New York Café for supper with Molnar. Molnar was sitting at his table, surrounded by his court. The great moment came; Feleki appeared, and the enemies shook hands; they were friends. But there was an assurance about Feleki's manner that annoyed Molnar, and he suddenly had the feeling that the reconciliation was premature. With a cordial wave of his hand, he motioned his old friend to a seat at the next table, then calmly began to eat his meal, stopping now and then to fix his chagrined and glowering enemy with his monocle.

After the first World War, Molnar began to pay the penalty for his long and undisputed dominance in his native city. The papers did not receive his plays with the unanimous fervor to which he was accustomed. They actually ventured criticism. As a result, he began to make excursions from Budapest. He went first to Vienna, where he was able to enjoy a new flood of adulation. His plays were produced in the Burgtheater, which was a national honor reserved principally for playwrights who were dead. His third wife, who accompanied him, also had a great success in Vienna. Thereafter, Molnar spent more and more of his time away from Budapest, and this defection was resented at home. Molnar's chief crime, however, was his commercial success in other countries. In the higher literary circles of Budapest, there was one sin which was beyond forgiveness. That was to be prosperous. In his memoirs, Stefan Zweig said that the same thing was true of Vienna; to make money out of literary work was considered vulgar. In either town, to make money out of America was the ultimate solecism, which confined you to a limbo from which no good works could possibly rescue you. Molnar committed this ultimate solecism repeatedly. His enemies said he no longer wrote for Hungary, he wrote for America. It was like a Harvard halfback making a touchdown for Yale. In the cafés, they called him Checkspeare. Between 1920 and 1930, Molnar's gross earnings from his plays were, in fact, enormous—amounting to well over a million dollars—but the net was much less, averaging about twenty-five thousand dollars a year, which was still an imposing sum in Hungary. His fiscal relations with agents and translators were very complicated and their fees were exorbitant. From "Liliom," not counting the substantial income he receives from "Carousel," he has made, in

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thirty-seven years, about fifty thousand dollars net. He sold the film rights for five hundred dollars. For a while, Molnar had a *prix fixe* of twenty-three thousand dollars for the foreign and film rights of all his plays. How he arrived at this figure he does not know; it just appealed to him. Three thousand dollars of the price was an advance against the stage rights and twenty was an outright payment for the film rights.

Molnar's absences from his native city kept getting longer. For the two decades following the end of the first World War, while his books and plays were current all over the world, he maintained what he called his "five-room apartment"—a room in the Hotel Hungaria in Budapest, another in the Imperial in Vienna, a third in the Pupp at Karlsbad, and one each at the Danieli in Venice and the Negresco in Nice. The five staffs necessary to keep up this apartment, he used to say without vanity, were numerically and in skill on a scale few men could afford in their private establishments. He felt that even the very rich might well envy him his unicellular luxury. Molnar believed in the dispersal not only of his apartment but also of his bank balance. The sensational failure, in 1931, of the Creditanstalt, Austria's leading financial institution, was a disaster for many people. It was possible for Molnar to be philosophical about it because he had acted (or so, at least, he claims) on a pet investment theory all his own. "In case of bank failures," he says, "the small depositor is always paid off first. Therefore, if you have a hundred thousand dollars, all you have to do is keep two dollars in fifty thousand banks. Under this system of dispersed deposit, a great many banks will have to fail simultaneously to do you any real harm."

Molnar's political instinct is extremely keen, and for a long time before the second World War he felt that a débâcle was coming. Sitting on a café terrace with Gilbert Miller in 1936, he waved a hand toward the Danube, flowing peacefully below, and said, "This won't last, you know." All through the thirties he allowed the money his plays earned in America to remain in this country. He was deeply impressed by a lighthearted remark he once overheard in a Budapest café and has often quoted it during the years of his exile: "A Jew should never own more property than he can jump quickly over a fence with." He has also remembered another: "A Jew should never keep his money in the country where he is. He should send it to some other coun-

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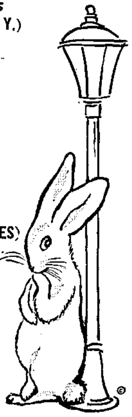

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Music and Lyrics by HAROLD J. ROME
Sketches by ARNOLD AUERBACH
with BETTY GARRETT
Production directed by ROBERT H. GORDON
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"A DREAM OF A PLAY"—John Chapman, News
ELMER RICE'S
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with HAILA STODDARD
Wendell Corey Evelyn Varden
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try. But he should always be in the country where his money is." In September, 1937, Molnar left Budapest for what may have been the last time. He spent the next year in the Venetian room of his apartment, and in 1939, when the war broke out, he was in Geneva, Switzerland, a country that had always courted visitors but was now nervous about them. It was afraid of food shortages, and there were even demonstrations against foreigners. Visitors were urged to go home, advice which it was peculiarly impossible for Molnar to act on, because the Nazis had already infiltrated into Hungary.

A companion of Molnar's Budapest days who visited him in Venice in 1938 noticed a great change in his outlook. The friend made a joke about the Jews and Hitler. Molnar said sharply, "It is bad taste to joke about things like that." This was a surprise; in the old days, the two men had joked about everything. The friend, on the defensive, said that before he left Budapest he had given five thousand pengos to help the historic boatload of Jews marooned in the middle of the Danube, on a ship that was unable to exercise one of the traditional functions of a ship; namely, to land somewhere. This gift, he argued, gave him the right to joke. But the easy mechanics of levity, which would have served in the old days, served no more; the scope for comedy was shrunken indeed. Molnar was grim. The friends parted, and the pengo giver came to America. In 1939, he and a number of other exiles, including Molnar's wife, who had been here for a year and a half, sent him cables urging him to follow. The expressions on the faces of the Geneva hotelkeepers became more and more forbidding and finally Molnar sailed for New York. Gilbert Miller reserved a room for him at the Plaza. He arrived on an Italian ship on the evening of January 12,1940, his sixty-second birthday. Darvas and four Hungarian cronies of old met him at the pier and escorted him to the hotel. They all had dinner in Molnar's room. There was a tense and agonized interval at the end, when the waiter came in with the check. For a moment time stood still. Molnar signed the check.

—S. N. BEHRMAN

(This is the first of three articles on Mr. Molnar.)

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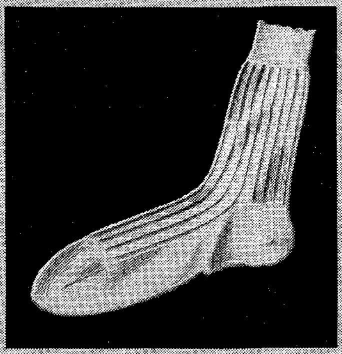
Local old loose carrots without tops rise to 7½ cents a pound.—*The Times.*

And we haven't seen the end yet, either.



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HELPMATE

THE telegram that came Thursday morning was from Kerby's wife, saying that she would be home on Saturday. The messenger had wakened Kerby an hour before his usual time, and for a while afterward he shuffled about the apartment, a serious, angular young man, enjoying the unwonted morning leisure, pleased with the brilliant May sunshine, and also well content with himself. The apartment, for one thing, was in excellent shape. This was a negative achievement, for he had simply not touched it at all for three weeks, eating in restaurants and coming home only for a nightcap and to sleep. Except for an accumulation of glasses in the sink and a fringe of gray around each ashtray, the place was fine.

He had seldom noticed the living room in the morning. Now he saw that the early light showed a thin film of dust on every surface; also, where the sun reached into corners, a number of puffs, soft as down. He guessed he might as well try to call Mrs. Brophy, who sometimes came to clean, when the notion seized her.

There were a confusing lot of Brophys in the telephone book, and his wife's desk, where one would suppose she might have kept the woman's number on a slip of some sort, looked like a magpie's nest. Rummaging in it, he wondered fondly how a woman so capable could keep her private precincts in such an appalling litter. A matter of compensation, he imagined, like the rubbish in her handbag. All in all, Kerby decided, he could just as easily brush up the place himself. Mrs. Brophy wasn't likely to come if he did reach her, and the job would kill an evening.

On his way home that night, Kerby stopped at a delicatessen and took along some sandwiches for supper. He reached the apartment and set to work at once. The tap water was scalding, and he let it run for a time into one of the glasses. He dusted for a while, came back to the kitchen and shifted another glass under the faucet, swept a bit, then shifted glasses again. He left the glasses upside down on the drainboard and found, to his satisfaction, that they didn't require drying at all. He mopped the kitchen and bathroom floors and made up his wife's bed, as the Army had taught him, to austere perfection. He had finished the whole job, with a minimum of fuss, by half-past eight.

He rose early again on Friday to inspect his work. The instant he walked into the living room, he knew that the cleaning had not been a total success. Where yesterday there had been a tranquil, quiet evenness, there now was an air of disorder. The dust had settled back again, but in streaks. The bathroom floor was full of whorls and sweeping shadows.

He took the afternoon off and returned grimly to the apartment, carrying scouring powder and furniture polish. Clad in shorts and sneakers, he labored throughout the afternoon. In many ways it was a refreshing and uplifting experience. He kept most of the windows open, and the breeze was cool on his hot back and arms. He had the radio on as he worked, and all the time he thought happily and affectionately of his wife. There was a good deal, he knew now, to keeping even a modest apartment as clean as this one always was. It wasn't a thing to take for granted. He hated to think of the times Mrs. Brophy hadn't come, and when, even so, his wife had been waiting for him, charmingly groomed, beside the cocktail tray at evening. He looked forward to telling her these thoughts, and also to telling her of his own efforts, so that she would know how much closer to each other they had grown this afternoon.

He had only reached the kitchen by dinnertime. He decided to leave it until morning. It would be just as well to have the kitchen the most gleaming zone of all.

U.S. MAIL
U.S. MAIL

IN the morning, Kerby made himself a light breakfast, then attacked the kitchen. He was just winding up with the sink when Mrs. Brophy came.

"Mrs. Kerby sent me a telegram," she said when he opened the door. She was a square woman with an air of profound and motherly calm. He stood aside and she stalked past him, seeming to take possession of the apartment by the very act of entering it. "I wouldn't do it for most, not on a day I should be doing my own cleaning. But for Mrs. Kerby . . ."

They'd have to pay her anyway, he

thought. The best thing would be just to let her see for herself that she wasn't needed, then ease her out politely. She went to the living room and he followed her. "You won't find much to do, I expect," he said.

"There's always enough to do and more," she said. She looked around the room appraisingly, and in spite of all evidence she plainly felt that it was deep in filth.

"As a matter of fact, I've been cleaning the place myself," Kerby said.

"Think of that!" she said kindly. "There's not many husbands would try to tidy up the house. Ah, well, here I stand chattering the time away as if I had nothing better to do."

She was off to the kitchen then, and for just a second he felt as if he had been telling not Mrs. Brophy but his wife of his exploits, and seen her smile and nod, as if to an eager child, before setting out to fix up the place herself. He knew that nothing he might say or do would stop Mrs. Brophy from cleaning the whole house again, but with a last, rebellious impulse he went to the kitchen to stave off defeat. Already she had her apron on and a pan of suds foaming in the sink. She was at the cabinet, looking over the glasses, and he saw that she was unerringly selecting the ones he had scalded so thoroughly two nights before and had not thought of since.

"I'll run along and get dressed, then, Mrs. Brophy," he said in a low, sick tone. "Will you want to work in the bedroom right away?"

"Just you go ahead, Mr. Kerby," said Mrs. Brophy, with a hospitable wave of her dishcloth. "I'll be busy here for a long time yet, so you won't be in the way at all, at all."

—ROBERT HENDERSON

•

Headquarters of CURC consists of a small studio and control room, both of which have to be kept securely locked, for pranksters abound. One sneaked in once and expressing opinions. Razzing is poured a bottle of milk into the power board, gumming up the works. Listeners are voluble in commonplace. So also are requests for special musical selections.—*The World-Telegram.*

There's a door open *some*where.

•

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THE THEATRE

ETHEL AND ANTON

Ethel Merman, whose voice might easily have tumbled the walls of Jericho, has some songs in her new show, called "Annie Get Your Gun," that will probably do the same thing for the Imperial Theatre one of these nights. Her material this time is the work of Irving Berlin, who once wrote a fine piece about a bugle and so is obviously just the man to turn out music for the most brazen and hilarious trumpet on the American stage. Given this sort of stuff—tunes that a girl can tee off on for extra bases and lyrics full of nice triple rhymes and double meanings—Miss Merman is a whole evening's entertainment all by herself. Perhaps in this case it is just as well, because "Annie Get Your Gun," while more sensible than most musical shows, is still burdened with a book that makes it appear, contrary to legend, that the celebrated Miss Oakley led a rather monotonous life—just love, love, love, diluted now and then with a little rifle practice—and the assisting performances, while generally pleasant enough, are never exactly what you'd call distinguished.

The star, however, more than makes up for any deficiencies in her vehicle. As everyone knows, Miss Merman has a particularly charming and humorous appearance. Her face is large and her features seem somehow to be closely grouped down toward the bottom of it; her shoulders are square and wide, so that her arms hang away from her sides; her hips and legs, though agreeable, were apparently designed for a much smaller woman; the whole effect, indeed, is queerly foreshortened, as if you were looking directly down on her from a ladder. In addition to these advantages, she has the gift of suggesting a wide range of emotion without perceptibly altering her expression—her leer is wonderfully suggestive but practically immobile; laughter disturbs her face only for an instant and then usually in only a rather chilly parody of amusement; and love for her, at least in "Annie," is expressed by a look of really terrible vacancy. All these attributes, finally, are heightened by the costumes she wears, which almost always seem designed to emphasize the basic oddities of her structure. Miss Merman, to get to the point of all this, can make me laugh just by coming out on the stage. When she has really funny songs, she kills me, and Mr. Berlin has been kind enough to provide her with some wonderful ones.

As I've complained too often before, it is almost impossible for a reviewer to recapture the humor of a performance on the musical stage, and lines from songs especially, when amputated from their context, are apt to seem about as gay and resourceful as commercial jingles on the radio. It is without much hope of communicating my own pleasure, therefore, that I report that a number called "You Can't Get a Man with a Gun" (Miss Merman is singing about her romantic frustrations, with particular reference to Frank Butler, a fine slab of man, though clearly her inferior with a .22) is the funniest song I've heard this season. While not quite achieving the mounting ingenuity of

Flying too high
With some guy
In the sky
Is my i-
Dea of nothing to do,

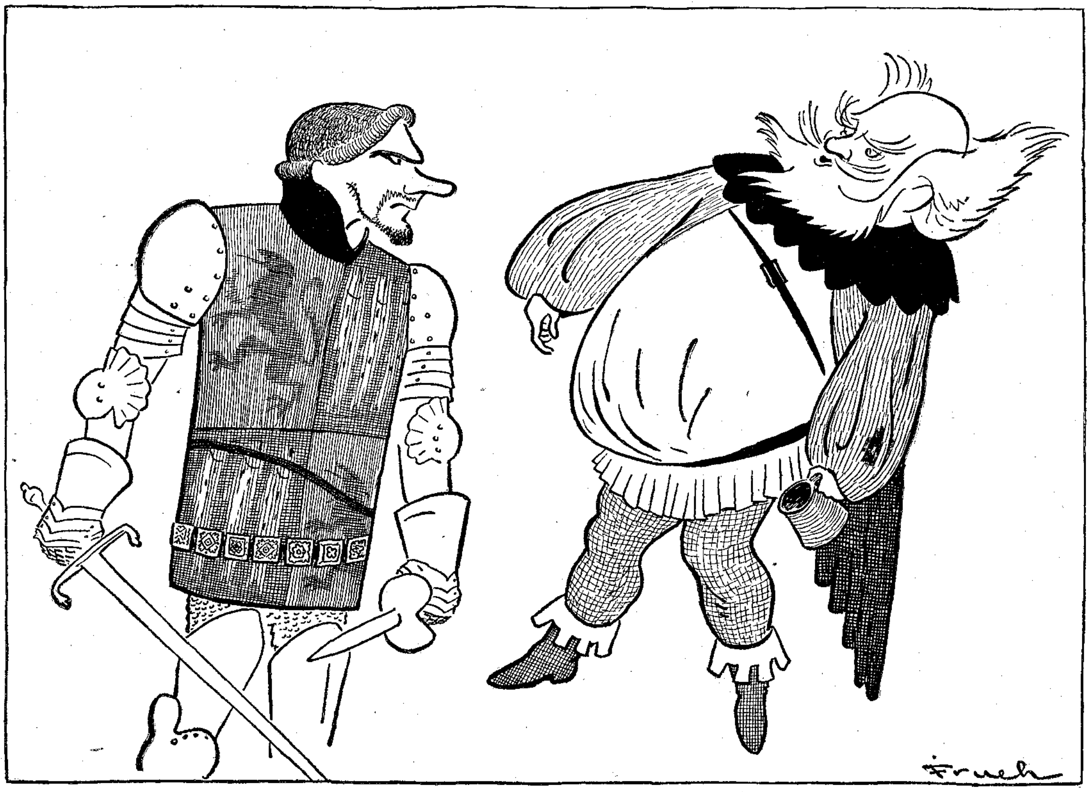
which distinguished another lyric of hers some years ago, it still contains some notable triplets:

A man may be hot
But he's not
When he's shot

and, even more robustly,

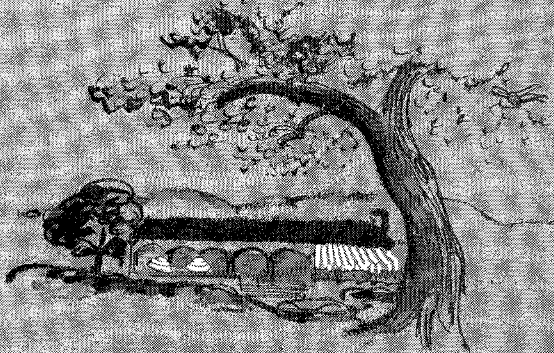
You can't shoot a male
In the tail
Like a quail.

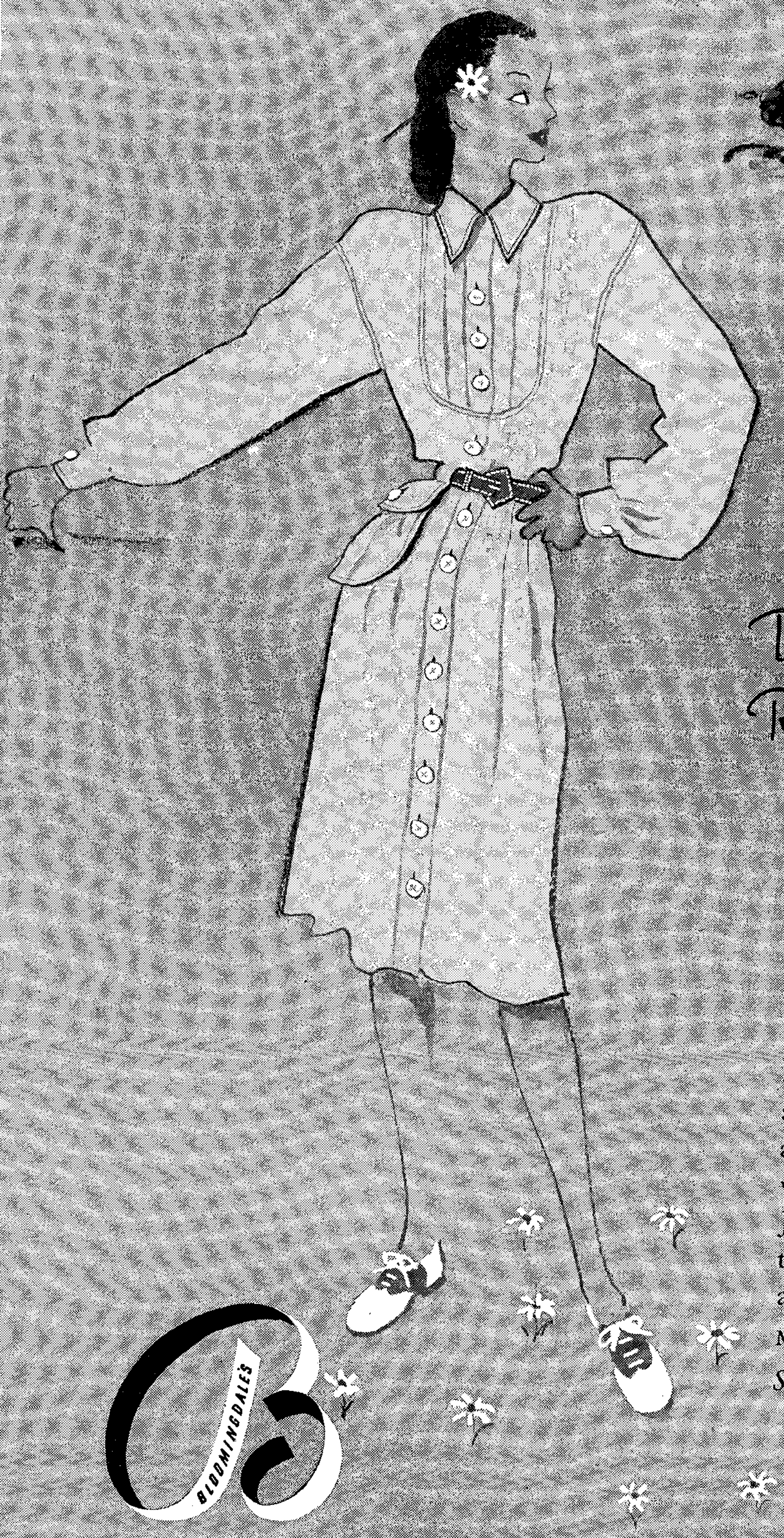
Delivered with Miss Merman's customary ferocity, this delighted me, and



OLD VIC THEATRE COMPANY

In this picture, Laurence Olivier and Ralph Richardson are shown as they appear in the first part of "Henry IV," a work which, as you can see, involves a considerable amount of crêpe hair. They play a good many other parts in the repertory bill at the Century, including the two discussed somewhere else in this department.





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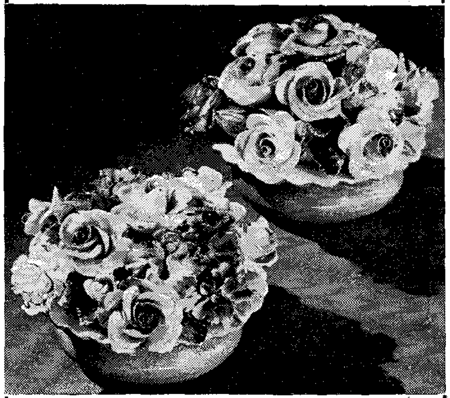

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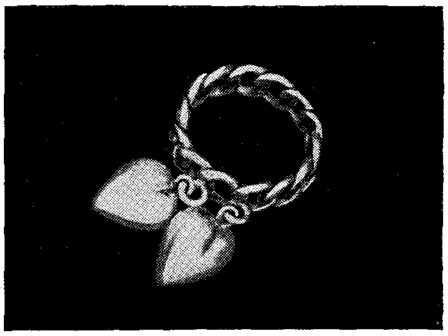
so did two somewhat similar numbers called "Doin' What Comes Naturally," which probably requires no further explanation, and "I'm an Indian Too," a chant celebrating her induction into a tribe known to her, with great elegance, as the Syews; and another, with a refrain going "Anything you can do, I can do better; I can do *anything* better than you," which seems to me a wonderful idea to embed in a love song.

These four pleased me most, but I liked all Mr. Berlin's offerings, with some slight reservations about the sentimental ones, and the book contributed by Herbert and Dorothy Fields, though not, as noted, without its dull patches, is never actually painful, which is high praise from a man who generally considers the literary framework of a musical comedy about the most irritating product of the human mind. Thanks to Jo Mielziner, who did the sets, and Lucinda Ballard, who designed the costumes, the show is charming and witty in appearance, and Helen Tamiris has thought up some nice, though not particularly enterprising, dances. The star is principally abetted by Ray Middleton, whose voice is almost as astonishing as hers, if slightly more academic, and William O'Neal, Marty May, Harry Bellaver, and an almost too exuberantly youthful couple called Kenny Bowers and Betty Anne Nyman are also helpful in enacting this saga of Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, Sitting Bull, and other celebrities of those high-spirited days. Miss Merman, however, is practically the whole story at the Imperial. At the moment, I am obliged to confess that I find her a great deal more rewarding than Chekhov.

"UNCLE VANYA," to bring Chekhov into this more directly, is a play that can hardly hope to avoid flippant criticism, since often in its interminable course it has the air of being a deliberate and wicked parody of all Russian drama. From the moment in the first scene when Vanya, responding to some comment on the weather, mutters, "Yes, it's a fine day to hang yourself," the characters go on monotonously about their personal afflictions and the general vacuity of life in the sticks. Astrov, torn irritably between medicine and forestry, complains that he doesn't really like *anybody* very much, finding the peasants little better than cattle and the members of his own class incredibly debilitated, which indeed they are; the Professor, a hypochondriac whose symptoms have bored the doctors of three cities, is endlessly depressed by his con-



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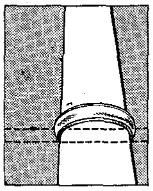

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dition as an old man with a young wife; Sonya, a plain girl, thwarted in love, speaks just as freely about *her* troubles; and the handsome and languid Yelena, though somewhat less discouraged than her friends, being of a naturally frivolous disposition, often finds the encircling gloom too much even for her composure and weeps with all the rest. The others—Telyegin, humorously known as Waffles because of his pockmarks; Marina, the ancient nurse; Marya, Vanya's old mother; and Yefim, an almost speechless serf—are not much more than random symbols of misery, but they, too, unquestionably contribute to the prevailing atmosphere of frustration and despair.

In producing all these terribly dispirited people, Chekhov was writing of the Russian middle classes of his time, and the relentless pessimism that marks their conversation must, I suppose, be accepted as an accurate report on the behavior of a real society. It is, however, a difficult identification for the modern American observer. Looking for some parallel in my own experience with the awful melancholy that envelops Vanya and his companions, I can think only of a period in my school days when a kind of weary cynicism, brought on by reading unsuitable books as well as by the usual exasperations of adolescence, seemed to me a very stylish attitude and when practically every day was a perfect one for hanging myself. I'm sure that the circumstances of Russian life and the natural temper of the Russian spirit in Chekhov's time accounted quite legitimately for the mood of "Uncle Vanya," but it is still very hard for me to think of it as anything but absurd. Astrov, certainly the most worldly specimen in the play, reminds me of too many moody sophomores, and the others, I'm afraid, would have been considered remarkably silly in prep school. In fairness, of course, it must be admitted that the author also meant to be humorous. He thought of his characters, however, as funny only in a macabre sense, almost, you might say, as Daumier caricatures of used-up people. There was certainly no idea of presenting them as figures in a comic strip, which is just about what they looked like to me at the Century.

The Old Vic Company, which chose this play as its third offering, also seems conscious of the uneasy balance between tragedy and nonsense in the script. Some scenes, especially the wearily repetitious ones at the beginning and end, are executed with a glum reverence and at a funereal tempo that ought to satisfy even the most morbid student. Some of

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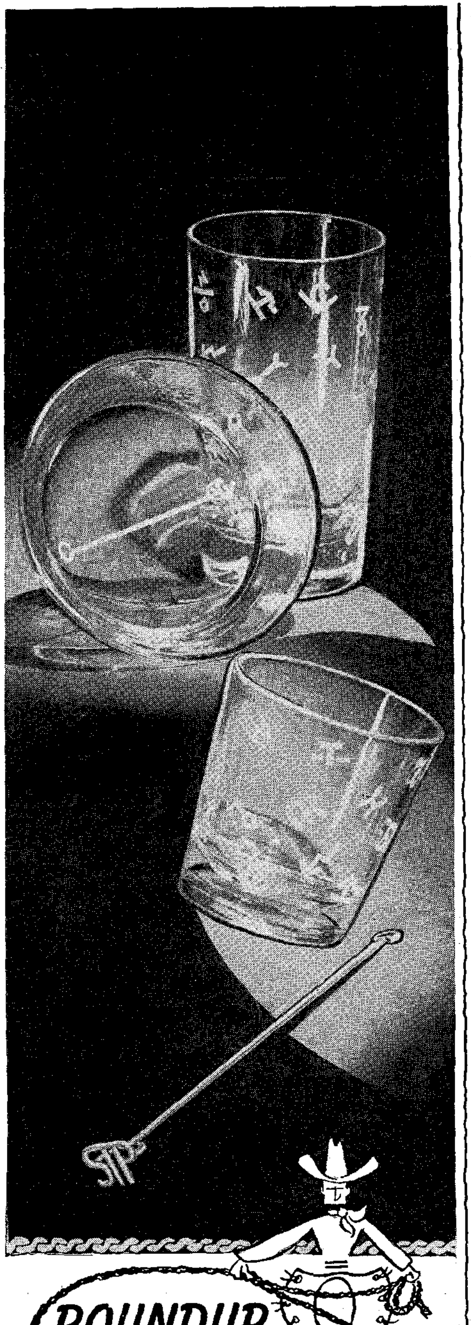

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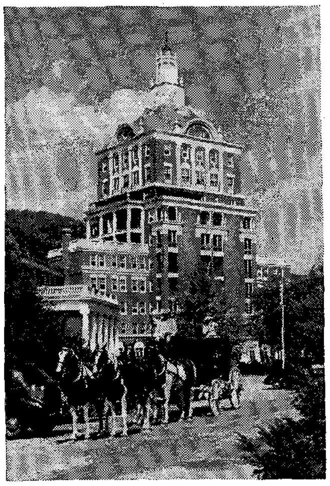
the others, however, notably those maniacal sequences in the second act which culminate with Vanya missing the Professor with two pistol shots at point-blank range, are obviously too much for the British sense of humor and they are executed very much as if they had been transplanted from “Hellzapoppin.” Most of my colleagues, having a decent respect for traditional dullness, deplored these excursions into burlesque. I am embarrassed to say that I found them hilariously funny, and a considerable relief from Chekhov as that lugubrious old celebrity is customarily played.

As they were in the first part of “Henry IV,” Laurence Olivier and Ralph Richardson are most prominently cast, and while I have my doubts about Mr. Richardson, the pathos of whose Vanya seems somewhat diminished by calculated mannerisms, I was delighted by Mr. Olivier’s Astrov, which has a pleasantly sardonic flavor, almost suggesting that the Doctor was occasionally amused by his own extravagant gloom. In spite of the style of this performance, however, I think that on the whole the most effective work is done this time by Margaret Leighton, who makes Yelena a very fetching and oddly contemporaneous study of beauty bored to imbecility by ridiculous men.

IN “Swan Song,” Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht have written what my young son, whose ear is still only approximate, sometimes calls a pysological drama. Adapted from the work of a team of alliterates called Ramon Romero and Harriett Hinsdale, “Swan Song” has to do with juvenile delinquency in the musical world. A famous old piano teacher (“Maestro,” naturally, to his disciples) has lost one protégée under rather cryptic circumstances indicating suicide, and now he has another, a twelve-year-old girl who just happened to skip in one afternoon from a neighboring convent. Since she can rattle off Chopin in a manner that might intimidate Oscar Levant, she is clearly on the threshold of a great career and presently an audition is arranged for her with Gustav Wexler, the famous impresario. Everything, in fact, would be lovely if it weren’t for the dead girl’s young brother, a definite pysiatric case, who wants to play Chopin, too, and, maddened by jealousy, first tries to break her baby fingers by dropping the piano lid on them and, when that fails, forces her to drink a jigger of bug poison. In the end, of course, she recovers and he goes crazier than Ophelia, complaining of pains in his head and

QUEEN OF THE MID-SOUTH



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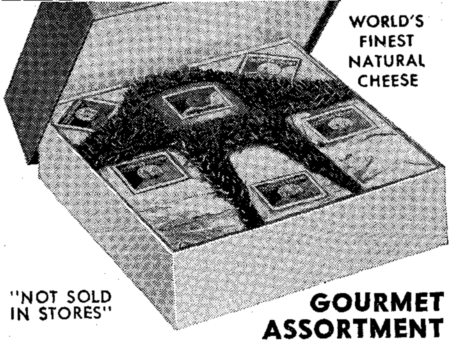

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In addition to these two talented children, there are any number of interesting subsidiary characters, including one of Maestro's old girls, who hooked him years ago at a Salzburg Festival and still pursues him as furiously, though unfortunately not as silently, as Harpo Marx; a lovable old gardener, who often talks things over with his flowers and dies a rather horrible death out behind the greenhouse; and a stupefying young music critic, who serves as half of about the most irrelevant love interest I can remember, and whose conversation is so affectionately based on that of the late Alexander Woollcott (one line, indeed, comes intact from the master's works) that I sometimes seemed to feel my toes bending upward with an old ennui.

I don't believe for a minute that either Mr. Hecht or Mr. MacArthur is disposed to take "Swan Song" any more seriously than I am. The only difference, in fact, between our opinions is that it seems probable that they imagine that it has sufficient novelty and suspense as a simple melodrama to delude a reasonable portion of the public, while I find it hard to imagine any mind innocent enough to be alarmed by their boyish goings on. There is, incidentally, another possible explanation for the play in a program note that reads, "Jacqueline Horner (Vera Novak) at the tender age of twelve is the avowed sweetheart of the co-authors . . . who freely admit that she is the principal reason they got together to write 'Swan Song.'" However, though Miss Horner is an engaging child and a formidable pianist (at eight, again according to the program, she appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Symphony and a few months ago she made her New York début at Town Hall), she hardly seems supernatural enough to inspire a whole play and I think we'll just have to conclude that the boys were being arch. The other members of the cast—Theo Goetz, Scott McKay, Marianne Stewart, David Ellin, Mary Servoss, and a dozen more—are probably reasonable approximations of musical types, if not especially interesting this time theatrically.

—Wolcott Gibbs

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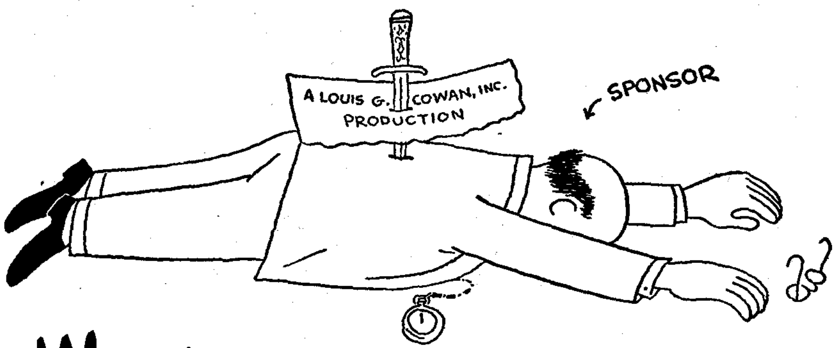
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The television camera in the U.N. conference room at Hunter College has been removed so that it can be set up at the Yankee Stadium for the Louis-Conn fight. Evidently, television audiences are more interested in deeds than in words.

•

The House of Representatives avoided a showdown on the controversial bill to create a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission by the simple expedient of adjourning for the day when the thing was about to be brought up. Many members were unaccountably seized by a craving for spring sunshine and fresh air.

•

The passage of the law exempting boys under twenty from the draft means that many men now in the service will not get out as soon as expected. It also means that congressmen will soon be getting complaints from an entirely new set of parents.

•

The New York Board of Transportation is planning to equip the subways with modern, streamlined cars, furnished with fluorescent lighting and new ventilating systems. The passengers will find everything improved except the view from the windows.

•

Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, the distinguished atomic-bomb physicist, believes that we have reached a point where armed conflict is too horrible to endure. The only possible way to win the next war, he says, is not to have one.

•

The more civilized side of science was revealed in an invention brought to light last week. A method has been discovered which will prevent toothpaste from leaking out of the wrong end of the tube. —HOWARD BRUBAKER

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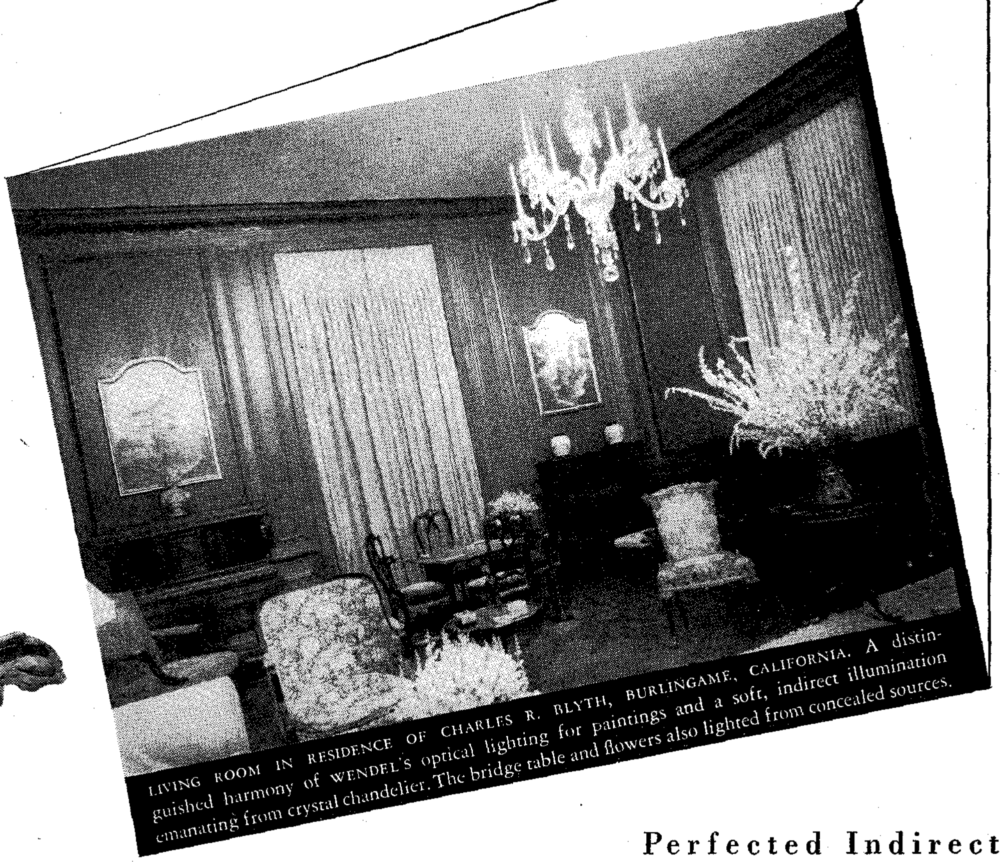

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A REPORTER IN CHINA

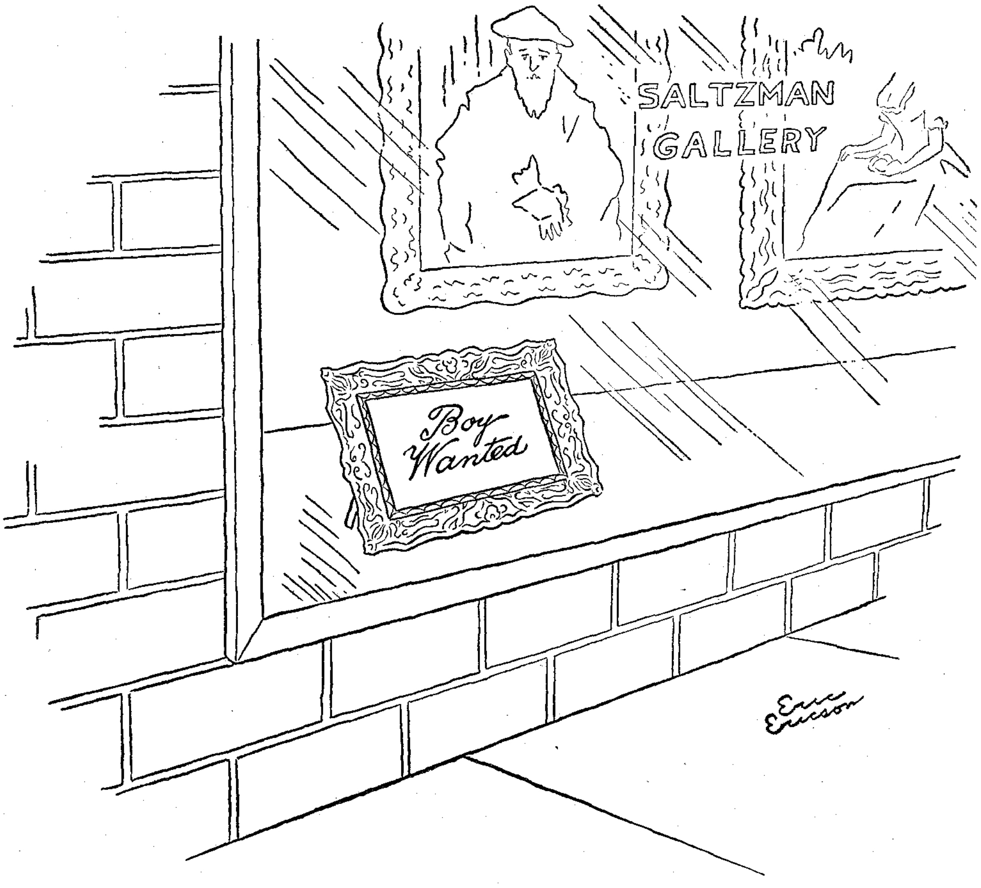
TWO WEEKS' WATER AWAY—II

A BROCHURE of instruction on the handling of Chinese troops, written by Lieutenant Colonel Sylvio L. Bousquin, of the China Theatre Headquarters of the American Army, says, "The reaction of Chinese troops to unforeseen circumstances is unpredictable." What Bousquin meant was demonstrated very clearly on the second morning of my voyage on the LST that I will call the 1300. Aboard the ship were nearly nine hundred Chinese officers and soldiers, mostly former farmers who had never been to sea before. The 1300 was the flagship of an echelon of six LSTs that was helping to give the New 22nd Division of China's New Sixth Army a "lift" from Shanghai to north China. When the echelon and its escorting destroyer changed course, as they got outside the mouth of the Yangtze River, the 1300 suddenly began to roll. The Chinese who were on the upper deck greeted the first roll with a cheer and a loud laugh. The next few dips and twists called forth all sorts of merriment. The soldiers started to shove each other in time with the ship's motion. Many others hurried up the ramp from the tank deck, where the enlisted men were quartered, to look at the waves and roar with laughter too. The troops were mostly supplied with British Army shoes, which have heavy hobnails, and the soldiers skated and slid on these hobnails from side to side. Whenever a man's feet skidded out from under him and he landed on the deck, all the others laughed even harder. A few minutes later, an atmosphere of sobriety and caution stole over the troops. They stopped laughing at each new heave of the vessel. Several, who had found out that I could speak a little Chinese, asked me if I was suffering from "boat dizziness." They were, they said. The deck cleared quickly. Most of the soldiers went below to lie down, but a few clung to the sides of the two wooden sheds on the upper deck which served as latrines. After one man slipped on his hobnails and hurt his leg badly, the men began to crawl about the deck on their hands and knees.

The sight of Chinese soldiers moving across the deck of the 1300 on their hands and knees confirmed in the ship's American crew the feeling that the Chinese were, at best, ridiculous. This feeling, and the belief that the Chinese were filthy, had already been very plainly manifested to the Chinese. The Americans were treating them worse than they had treated the Japanese they had carried, some time before, on repatriation runs. The Chinese resented the Americans' attitude. The Chinese officers, many of whom were graduates of the Central Military Academy and veterans of both Burma campaigns, were especially offended. Matters had come to a climax of ill will early that morning, and Major Chow, the Chinese officer who was in charge of the troops aboard, had been summoned before the skipper of the 1300 and been given a lecture on American methods of keeping a vessel shipshape. It was shortly after the conference that the 1300 began to roll and Major Chow, distinctly ill, took to his bunk, where he stayed all the rest of the voyage.

The upshot of the conference between the Major and the skipper was that the Air Corps lieutenant who had been assigned to the ship as liaison officer, a Texan I'll call Jackson, was now given a free hand as mediator between the Navy and the Chinese. Up to then, in part because the ship's officers did not quite trust an Army man to keep their ship clean, and in part because the liaison officer's interpreter was Cantonese and could not make himself understood by most of the Chinese soldiers on board, Lieutenant Jackson had been bypassed. Jackson had had no instructions on how to get along with the Chinese. He could not speak the language and, like the ship's officers, he called the passengers Chinks and considered them hopelessly backward and dirty. He was, however, a willing worker and, I soon found, a sympathetic man. I saw him now out on the deck, trying, through his interpreter, to persuade the seasick Chinese to tidy up the ship and introducing them to the technique of sweeping and mopping. The Cantonese interpreter, thoroughly bewildered by everything he saw, was pitching in with a broom himself. Every time I met Jackson, he shook his head dolefully.

One of the things the skipper had been most vehement about at the conference with Major Chow was the fact that the Chinese officers were keeping two police dogs in their quarters on the second deck. He had ordered the Major to get the dogs above. Since the hatchway from the officers' quarters to the top deck had for some reason been padlocked by one of the ship's ensigns, the dogs could be taken out only by



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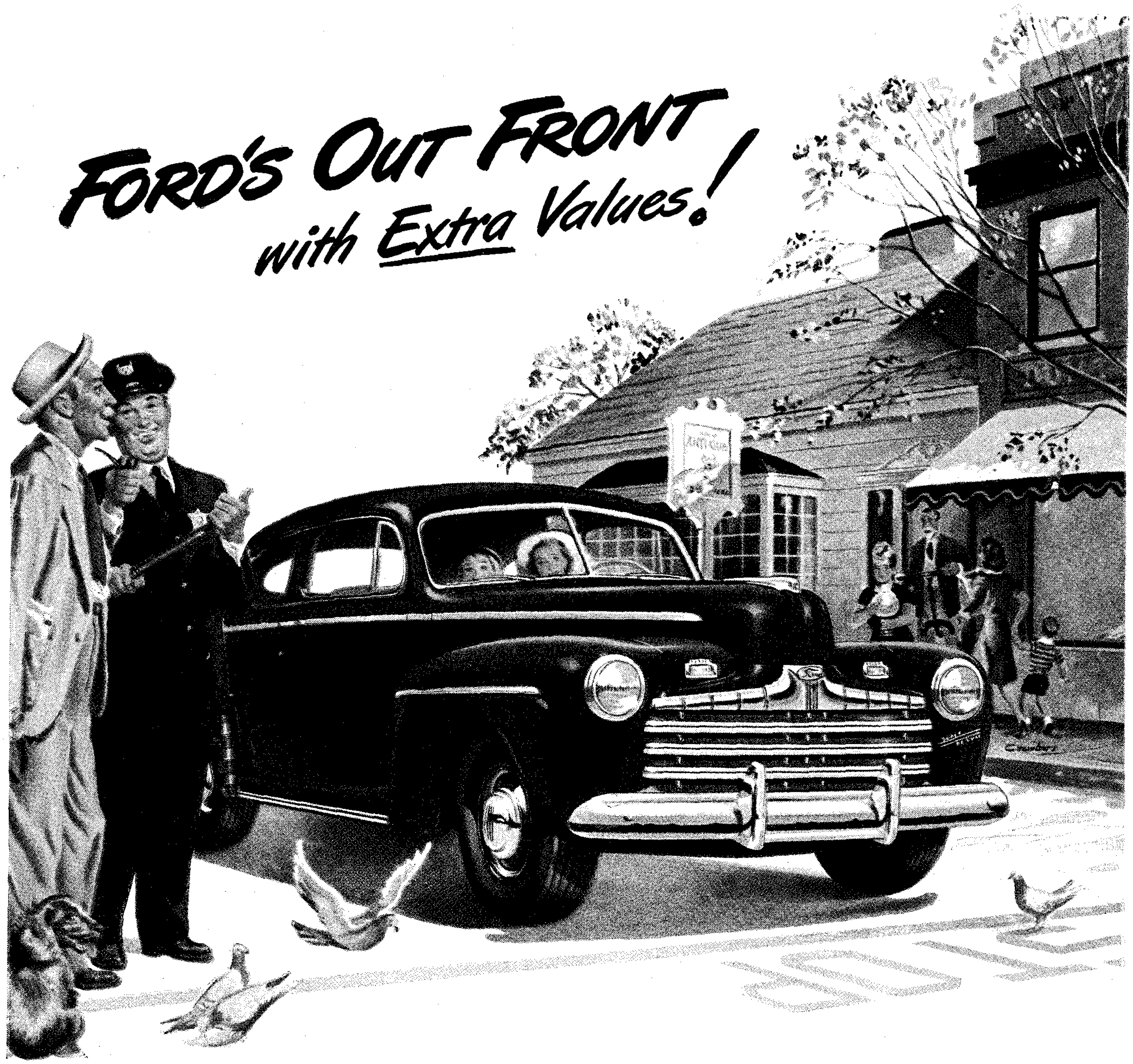

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way of a perpendicular ladder, through an emergency hatch down to the tank deck, and thence up the ramp to the top deck. However, the officers took the dogs above soon after the conference, lifting them up the ladder, which was not an easy job.

DURING that afternoon, the sea became somewhat calmer and quite a few Chinese ventured up on deck again. But they were not as happy as they had been the day before. The news of Major Chow's conference with the skipper had spread quickly, and the taste of rough weather at sea had not been pleasant. All that afternoon, the soldiers who knew that I spoke some Chinese were asking, "How long is this trip going to take?" One of them said to me, "Is this a Japanese ship or an American ship?" I told him it was American. "Oh," he said. "A train would be better than this." Another soldier said, "Even an airplane would be better than this." He was entitled to his opinion, for the whole 22nd Division had twice been transported by air.

That same afternoon, a tall soldier of about forty who wore dark glasses both above- and below-decks, came up and told me he was from Tientsin, which happens to be my birthplace. His name was Chang. We talked about Tientsin a while. Then he said, "In Burma, we saw many American soldiers. They could all speak good Chinese. We liked *them* very much." What he thought of the Americans on the 1300 could easily be inferred.

"How long were you in Burma?" I asked.

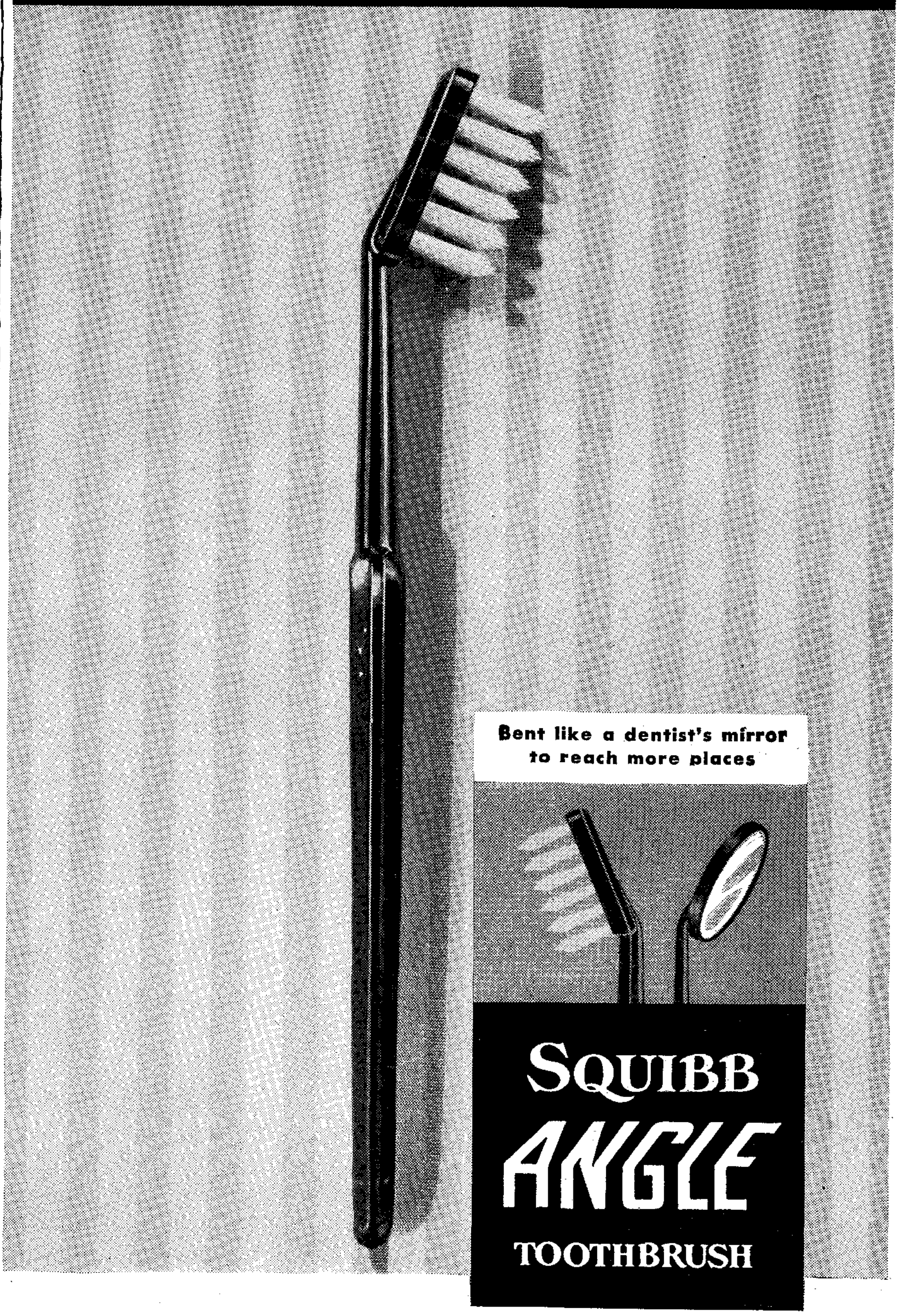
"Eleven months altogether."

"How was it?"

"Oh, sometimes we had difficulties. But it was not too bad. In this division, the soldiers are not afraid to die. If an officer told those three men over there to jump in the sea, they would not ask him why. They would jump. In Burma, if the men were asked to do a job that meant getting killed, they went and did it." This statement was typical of the confident spirit of the 22nd Division.

As we were talking, an American sailor, evidently a green man, came up from below with a trash barrel full of papers and wood shavings and dumped the barrel over the windward rail. Papers and shavings blew back all over the deck. Lieutenant Jackson shook his head. His platoon of Chinese sweepers went right to work on the mess. What had not occurred to the sailor was apparently obvious to

NOTE THAT ANGLE



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them. "He ought to look at the wind," one of the farm boys said to his companions.

Late in the afternoon, the soldiers received their only meal of the day—a bowl of rice and a small cube of bean curd. During supper in the wardroom—the third excellent meal of the day for the ship's officers—the skipper expounded his views on China, the war, American politics, the United Nations, and many other things. He revealed himself to be an extremely bitter man. The only two things he seemed ever to have enjoyed were nailing shingles on roofs, which he had once done professionally, and the time he had temporarily deafened his wife during a squirrel shoot by firing his gun too close to her right ear. He was opposed to our having any foreign commitments. His ignorance about China was total; his prejudices about its inhabitants were vast. This man, I am afraid, was principally responsible for the bad feeling which was being engendered on the ship. His officers, who had already learned the price of insubordination aboard his ship, agreed eagerly with everything he said.

AFTER supper, Lieutenant Jackson told me that he had been invited below for a social evening with a group of Chinese soldiers, and asked me to go with him. One of the men had a gramophone, and the group had assembled many sorts of records. There were marches, sentimental Chinese songs, excerpts from classical Peiping operas, and recordings of Mei Lan-fang, the noted female impersonator. For the express pleasure of their guests—our hosts' faces showed that the music did not send them in the least—they even played a record of Dinah Shore singing "Why Don't You Fall in Love With Me?" Their favorite Chinese songs were "Wedding Song," "Bury the Flower," and "True, Good, Beautiful," and these did not send us. I guess that music will never be a bond between China and America.

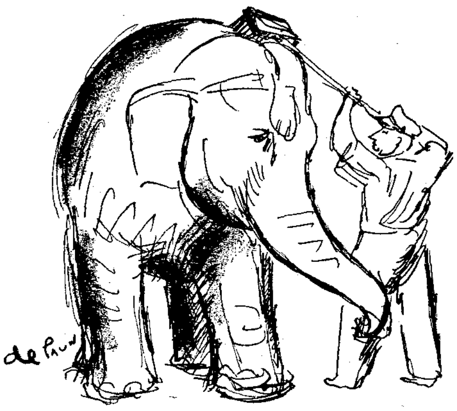
The men had printed slips, one for each Chinese record, giving the words. The meaning of spoken Chinese words lies in the "tone," the rise and fall of inflection which makes the Chinese language seem singsong to Western ears. A singer, since he must follow the music of a song, cannot let his tones wander all over the place, and so, if one does not already know the words, one must have a key sheet. I cannot read Chinese, but one of the soldiers who could speak some English offered to tell me about "Wedding Song." I took down exactly what he said: "Very happy! Very happy! Every gentleman and miss today will come here. Both the engaged couple will come. This boy is the scholar, nice and polite. This girl is as fine like as the moon, beautiful like the flower. Soon to the boy and the girl nature will give the fine chance. We hope you love forever. That you will be two lilies." He stopped to explain about the lilies. "That's because," he said, "at China have custom that one lily grow from one seed and give two flowers together. Today," he went on, "it's very fine. Red flower and green willow tree very thick. Wind and sun are warm. At the bedroom. That room very nice. Lots of flowers pave the floor. That makes the human life very fine. Two red candles make the party happiness. Good luck forever. You listen! Many guests said, 'To this boy and girl, God gives the happiness.' All these people full of smell and laugh." Questioning developed that the "smell" in the last sentence should have been "smiles." The soldier was very worried that he had spoiled the mood of the thing by that mistake. Jackson and I assured him he had not.

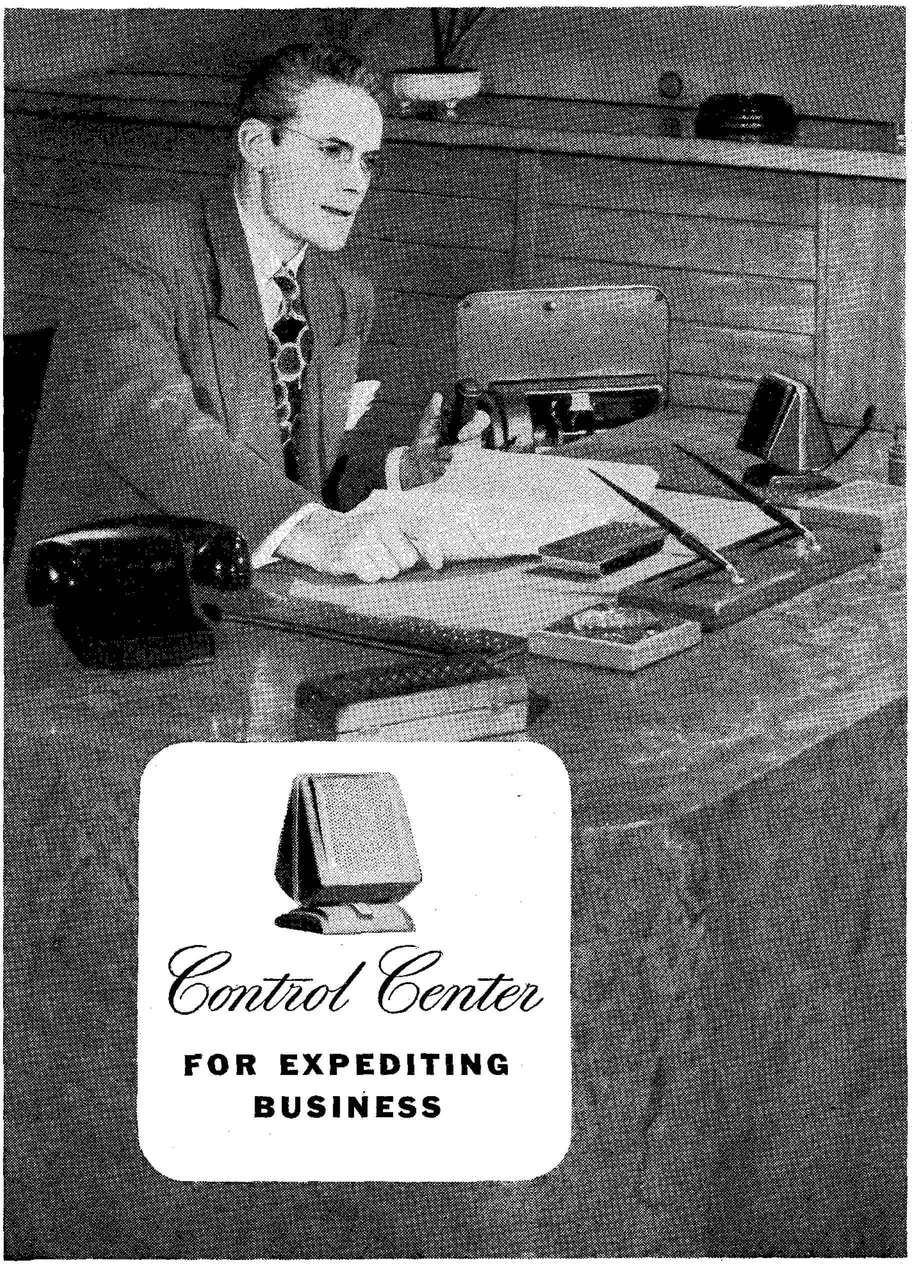
AT the end of the entertainment, we discovered that some of the Chinese officers had gone above in the darkness and had brought the dogs down out of the cold. Lieutenant Jackson, who saw no harm in having the dogs below, said nothing. Clearly, a contest of wits was developing between the Chinese and the ship's officers.

When I went out on the top deck next morning, I noted that the dogs were there again, where they were supposed to be. Lieutenant Jackson was also there, trying to get everything shipshape before inspection time. During the inspection, which was conducted by the ship's executive officer, I noticed a certain amount of playful sabotage on the part of the Chinese. Down on the tank deck, the executive officer came upon a coiled fire hose over which canteens, knapsacks, and a couple of lanterns had been draped, and he said to Ch'ing, an English-speaking retired Chinese Army officer who had come along with the Division as an unofficial liaison man, "Better get that gear down off the fire equipment." Ch'ing passed the order on in Chinese. At once the Chinese sitting and lying nearby began to shout orders to each other. "Take the things off the hose!" "Take those things down!" "Remove those things!" There ensued a great deal of bustle and running about, but no one did anything about getting the gear off the hose. A similar thing happened on the upper deck. The executive officer saw some grains of rice strewn about and ordered that they be removed. The Chinese shouted a lot, rushed around after brooms, and swept the rice back and forth on the deck, but not off it.

Later, during the American officers' lunch, Ch'ing entered the wardroom and meekly asked the skipper to do the Chinese officers a favor. Would he have the hatch at the top of the stairway from their quarters to the upper deck unlocked? "The officers need ventilation," Ch'ing said. The skipper granted the request. But fresh air was not really what the Chinese officers wanted. For the rest of the voyage, the two dogs were brought down the hatch late every night and taken above early every morning, which was much easier than using the perpendicular ladder.

That afternoon, I looked up Chang, the man from Tientsin. He was sitting in the enlisted men's quarters with a few of his friends, and they were all eating dried watermelon seeds. They split the husks with their teeth and dug out from each seed a tiny sliver of meat. The men told me that they were doing this not for nourishment but just for sociability. Chang asked me what job I had on the ship. When I told him that I was a correspondent, he seemed relieved. He said, with a touch of sarcasm, "The American water soldiers on this ship are interesting." He looked at me carefully and then, as if he felt that he had been untactful, he said, in a conciliatory tone, "In every country you have men who get angry easily and others who are quiet." One of Chang's friends asked him, "Did the Americans have a concession in Tientsin?" "No," he said, and without hesitation he added, "Seven nations took concessions at one time or another: Britain, France, Belgium, Japan, Italy, Russia, Germany." Chang, it seemed, was well versed in





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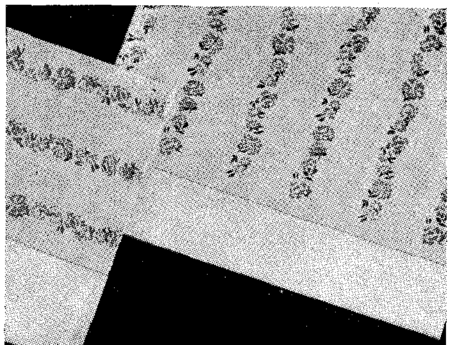

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infringements on China's sovereignty. So, I discovered in later conversation, were other soldiers, particularly the city dwellers, who were of course much better informed than those who had been farmers.

I persuaded one of the enlisted men to show me his gear, and I realized that my impression that he was almost entirely fitted out with American stuff was quite wrong. He was excellently equipped. Besides one suit of American olive drab, he had a set of British khakis, a uniform of Chinese padded cotton, two Japanese overcoats (one of them fur-lined), a Japanese aviator's fur-lined jacket and pants, a pair of British hobnailed shoes, a pair of fur-lined Japanese shoes with canvas uppers, a pair of Japanese gloves, three Japanese blankets, a Chinese feather quilt, a Chinese oil-cloth poncho, a Japanese fur-lined hat with ear flaps, a British canteen, a British washbasin helmet, Chinese cotton leggings, and British woollen leggings. All the officers and some of the men had American helmets. The Division's armament was altogether American.

As the sun was about to set, Chang and I went above. The evening was beautiful and calm. We were off the Shantung Peninsula, and Chang spoke feelingly about his native north China. I asked him when he had left Tientsin.

"In the twenty-second year," he said. Most Chinese figure dates from the year of the Sun Yat-sen revolution, 1911.

"Then you haven't been home for twelve years?"

"No. I have been a soldier."

"When do you think you'll get back?"

"How should I know? But I want to go back."

"I like people from Tientsin."

He said sharply, "What's good about them?"

"They seem to me happier and straighter than the people from Shanghai."

"They're lazy. They have no patience. They fight a lot. A man can only lie once to them, and they will fight. But on the whole, the people of the north—the people of Hopeh, Shantung, Shensi, Shansi, Kansu—all know how to suffer."

The sun was beginning to make its plunge over the horizon. The soldiers standing on deck were pointing and shouting: "Into the sea!" "How fast it goes!" "It shows that the world is round!"

Chang looked through his dark glasses at the sun. "He has been working hard all day," he said. "He is running home. I do not like the sunset. This is the most beautiful part of the day, but I do not like to see it. It gives me the same feeling as when a flower dies or leaves fall off a tree. I am older when I see it; I feel older. I have only thirty more years to live." He would not talk any more after that, so I left him alone with his homesickness and went to see Lieutenant Jackson.

Jackson was lying in his bunk, reading an Ellery Queen mystery. I asked him how he was getting along with the passengers. "Say!" he exclaimed. "I went down there and traded card tricks with them this afternoon. They sure enjoyed it when you caught them at what they were doing. They laugh easier than any people I ever saw. I used to wonder why these Chinese were so backward. I reckon I'm beginning to know—they're just so happy the way they are, they don't care about changing." Jackson, I noticed, was now calling the passengers Chinese.

THAT evening, Jackson and I went again to visit the troops. This time the Chinese entertained their guests and themselves bilingually. Even those who could understand no English got a great deal of amusement out of the efforts of their colleagues. One man laboriously read aloud from a Chinese-English book published in Shanghai and entitled "Master English Conversation in 100 Days." "How grieved I am," he intoned, "to hear of your failure." Everybody laughed. He went on, "Cheer up, dear friend, failure is the father of success, you know. There is still a bright future before you. Don't let your grief impair your health."

Next, a second lieutenant named Lai, whom I had met the first day out, began mimicking the American officers who had trained his heavy-mortar battalion at Ramgarh, in India, after the Division had had to withdraw from Burma when the fighting had gone against them and their allies. "O.K.," he said. "We will start the morning. Any questions? No questions? O.K. Dismissed!" He chanted firing orders. "Elevation forty-five. Left one hundred. Gun one, one round! Fire!" Then, in a tone of simulated disappointment, "Just miss." Finally, he imitated the exasperation of the American instructors with their Chinese pupils. "You stupid bastard!" he shouted furiously. "What makes you so dumb?"

When the laughter died down, one of the Chinese said, "English is a funny-sounding language. Everything is run together."

Another asked me if I liked the Chinese language. I said I liked north Chinese, but Cantonese and some of the southern dialects sounded very choppy and ugly to me.

A man named Hsu said, "Yes, they are. We need an international language. Then we would understand each other better. We do not even have one language all over China."

Someone else asked me, "Did anyone ever call you a *yang kwei tze?*"

I had forgotten what the phrase meant. I asked Hsu to translate. He seemed embarrassed. Finally, he said, "Foreigner."

Then I remembered and laughed. "*Yang kwei tze*" means "foreign devil." When the man who had asked me the question realized that I knew what the phrase meant, he said anxiously, "I hope you didn't mind my saying '*yang kwei tze*.' "

I said I did not.

Hsu said dejectedly, "Yes, we need one language for everybody."

THE next morning, I struck up a conversation with an exceptionally bright soldier named Li, who was only sixteen years old. He told me that he had been in the National Army six months and was a second-grade private, the lowest rank in the Chinese Army. I asked him how much money he earned a month.

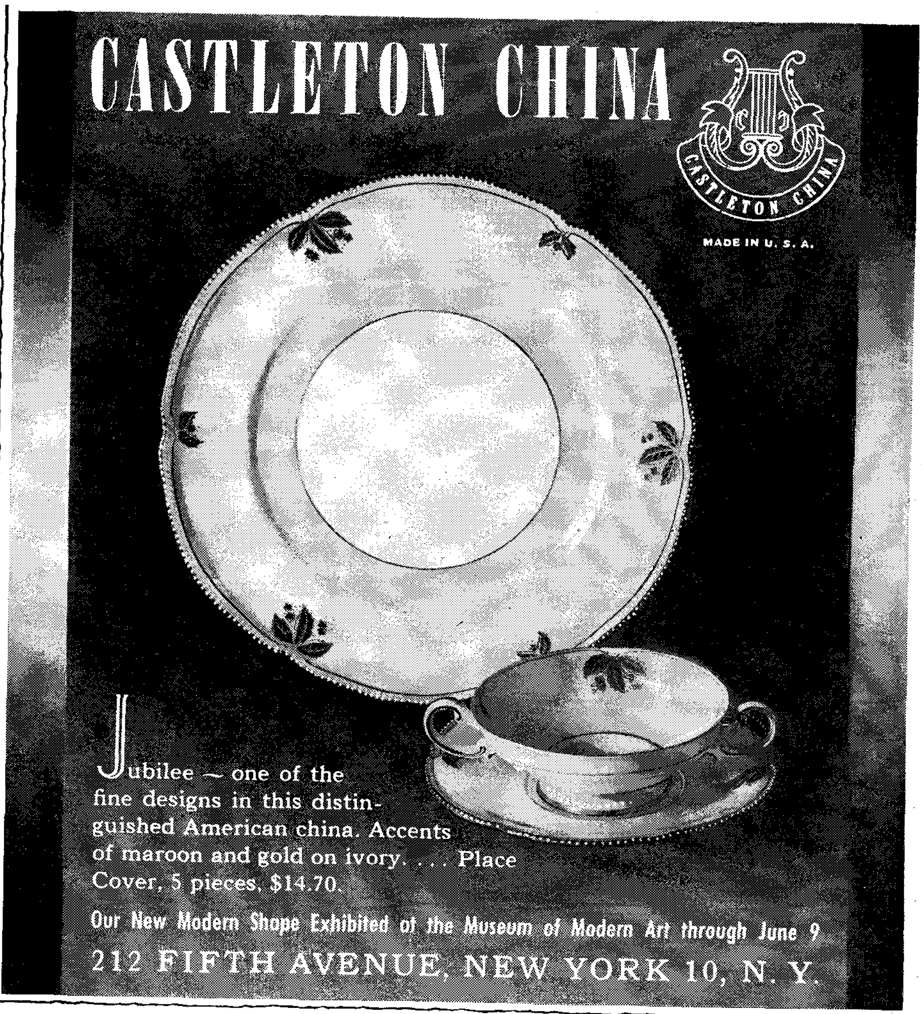
"Eleven hundred dollars," he said. At the present rate of exchange, that is about fifty-five American cents.

"That's not much for a month, is it?"

"What I want to get out of the Army is skill," he said. "The money doesn't matter to me. A man has to serve his country. While I am serving, my ambition is to better myself, learn some technical things."

Most of the enlisted men I had talked with had been more or less nationalistic, but none of them had been particularly exercised about the Chinese Communists. Li, however, said, in answer to a question, "The Communists harm the country. They want to be the sovereign rulers. They consider that the Three People's Principles of Sun Yat-sen are wrong. I think the Three People's Principles are most important for the reconstruction of China. The Communists find ways to destroy the established government of China and the virtue of this country. We must put them away!"

Then Li said that he had been born



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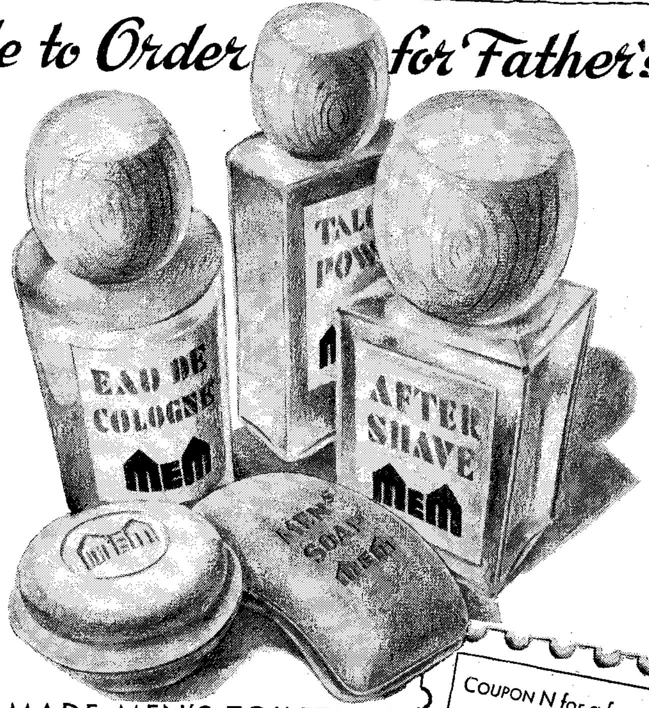

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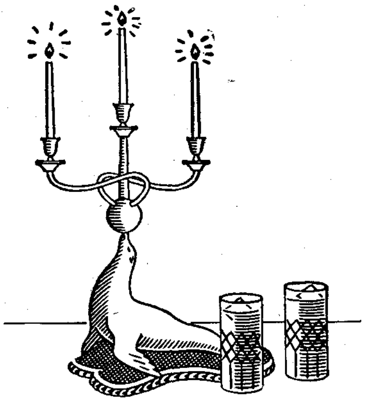

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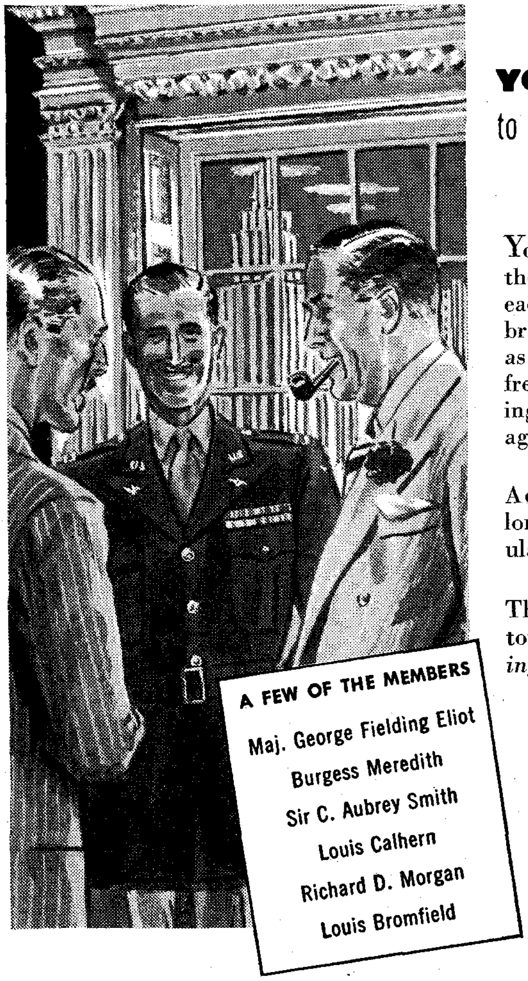

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AFTER SHAVING

in Peiping and that when the war started, his family had moved to Tientsin. He had lived there until the Japanese had seized his family's home, four years ago. He had made his way south to Nanking. For two years Li, who now repeated so sincerely the proper views of a Kuomintang soldier, had fought in the Japanese puppet army of Wang Ching-wei. He had heard nothing of the Kuomintang-Communist negotiations in Chungking. He did not even know that America had been in the war, and when I told him that it had been, he asked me, "Were any battles fought in America?"

What Li told me about his wages made me curious about the pay of higher ranks. The highest of the three grades of private, I learned, gets the equivalent of seventy-four cents a month. The highest grade of sergeant gets around a dollar and eighty-five cents. A first lieutenant gets just a little less than eight dollars, and a full colonel gets approximately eighteen-fifty a month. For some privates, steady meals and warm clothing are enough to reconcile them to the martial life. But for a full colonel, who cannot subsist on his salary in a city like Shanghai, the temptations to dishonesty must be many and difficult to resist. It is not surprising that the Chinese Army is ridden with graft; after all, a major earns less than the average Shanghai rickshaw coolie.

THAT afternoon the sea was wonderfully calm, and the destroyer that was with our formation of LSTs came alongside the 1300. A line flew across the gap between the ships. Then a cable was hauled across, and on the cable the escort's crew attached a mailbag. Sailors of the 1300 drew the bag across the gap, took something out, put something else in, and the escort pulled the bag back. Then the cable was hauled aboard the escort, which sailed away. The Chinese on deck were fascinated by this mysterious transaction. Actually, all that had happened was that the two ships had been exchanging cans of movie film. The destroyer had sent us "The Three Caballeros." When the exchange had been completed, the captain of the escort shouted to the skipper of the 1300, "Thanks a lot! It's so calm today I thought we might try a breeches-buoy drill. Haven't had one for a long time." I was standing on deck, and I heard the skipper of the 1300 shout back through his megaphone—and I'm sure some Chinese near me who understood a little English also heard him shout—"That's

O.K. If you want to have a man-overboard drill, I'd be glad to drop a couple of these Chinks over the side for you!"

One of the soldiers was very small, and I asked him how old he was. He told me he was fourteen, that he had been in the Army for a year, that he came from Szechwan, the province in which Chungking lies, and that he had been a farmer before the war.

"Which do you prefer," I asked, "farming or soldiering?"

"Being a soldier," he answered quickly.

"Why?"

"Food better. Clothes better."

A soldier named Shao said, "Look! I have English shoes, American pants, a Japanese jacket, and a Chinese cap."

I had forgotten the word for "international," so I said, trying to convey the idea, "It's a United Nations uniform."

"What countries belong to the United Nations?" Shao asked me.

Still another soldier said he could answer that. He had a small enamel badge on his chest, pinned where Americans wear ribbons, and he showed it to everyone. It had the colors of China, the United States, Great Britain, and Russia on it. He said he had bought the badge. I had noticed others wearing badges with a portrait of the Generalissimo on them. These also had been bought. None of the soldiers wore military decorations of any sort.

Someone said, "England and America must be the friendliest of the United Nations. They speak the same language."

Shao said, "That's not true. There are differences, like our dialects. When an American talks about *tiao wu*, he says 'dance.' An Englishman says 'dahnce.' I like to dance. How many girl friends do you have?"

I said I was married and had three children. To my astonishment, everyone applauded.

Shao said, "We are getting in tomorrow. Do you know what time?"

I said, "About noon. Will you be glad to get there?"

"Yes," he said. "I get boat dizziness when the ship rocks. We have no meat or vegetables on the ship. We have rice, but it is badly cooked. I can't eat it."

"How long is it since you've eaten?"

"For three days. It's not bad. In Burma, we used to go without eating for four or five days at a time, and we were fighting there. We are not fighting here."

A few minutes later I went into the

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The Oregon Journal, Portland's favorite newspaper, has done much to develop this postwar growth. Result: The Journal today offers advertisers the largest peace-time circulation in its history, daily and Sunday.

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wardroom. The messboy told me we were having steak for dinner—would I like mine rare, medium, or well done? I told him I'd take it rare.

ALL that night, on our way across the Gulf of Chihli, we moved through a heavy storm. On one of the other LSTs, two trucks broke loose on the upper deck, and the liaison officer and several sailors risked their lives getting them lashed down. Nobody on any of the ships got much sleep, and tempers were stretching taut by the time we reached the small coal port of Chinwangtao, at about noon of our fifth day.

A Marine liaison officer called a conference of the senior Chinese officers from the various LSTs. The meeting was held aboard a staff ship docked in the harbor. Chow got up from his bunk on the 1300 and attended. The Marine tactfully explained the debarkation procedure: first, the men would carry off their packs; then they would come back and unload cargo; then they would clean up the ships.

The unloading lasted well into the afternoon. There was a deplorable tendency among the Chinese, as soon as the cargo was all ashore, to duck without cleaning up the ships. I was sitting aboard the staff ship that evening when the skipper of one of the other LSTs of our echelon came in. He was smoking a cigar. "Who is the commanding officer here?" he asked. The captain of the staff ship identified himself. "Sir," the skipper of the LST said, "I'd like to report that the Chinese on my ship are all through working, but they forgot to clean up."

"Have they off-loaded everything?"

"Yes, I believe they've taken off everything that belongs to them except their dirt."

"I know how it is."

"Maybe. But I want you to know I'm very hot about this. I've carried Japs and I've carried Chinese, but there wasn't a Jap who would dare to leave a ship in the condition my ship is in now."

I went back to the 1300. I found that our skipper was also very hot. "They walked off here leaving the tank deck in terrible shape," he said. "At least a hog gives himself room to turn around in. Not these Chinks." I learned, however, as soon as I left the skipper, that a working party of ten men had returned and was then busy, so I went below to take a look. The working party, I discovered, had swept and swabbed the tank deck, and they were

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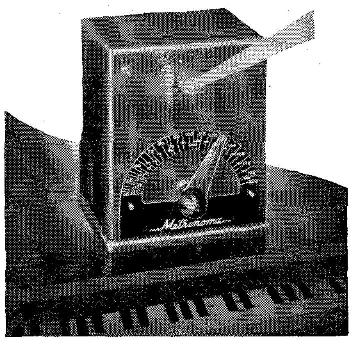

We must confess that we never cease to be surprised by the wonders of science. Now it's an electronic time-beat (remember the old-fashioned metronome your music teacher used?), and its heart is a thyraton tube, as used in radar. Plug it in—and Metronoma not only *sounds* the beat, but it also has a little light that *flashes* the beat with split-second precision.

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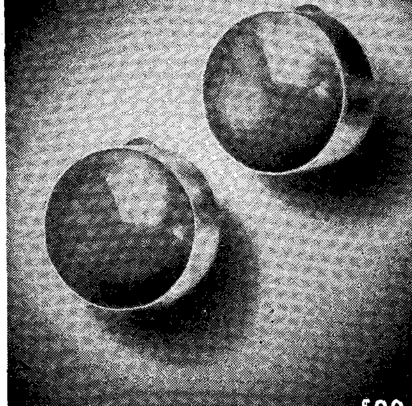

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now mopping it again with creosote solution. Lai, the bilingual comedian, was in the working party. He came over to me and said in Chinese, "That officer"—pointing to the American ensign who was supervising the work—"threatened me with his pistol. Every day in Burma ten thousand Japanese used to point their small arms at me. I'm not afraid of one pistol."

Lai went on to say that the working party had had orders to rejoin its unit ashore by seven o'clock that evening. After sweeping and swabbing once, the group had started to leave. The ensign had said that the deck was not clean enough. The Chinese thought it was. The ensign had clapped his hand on his holster and said, "In our Army and Navy, we do our fighting with these things." Lai told me he thought the ensign was comical. Then he indicated Lieutenant Jackson, who was standing near us, and said to me, "But that officer behaves like a guest." I told Jackson of the compliment Lai had just paid him. Jackson was obviously moved; he had worked very hard for five days. He clapped Lai on the shoulder and said, "You're O.K. yourself."

Much later that night—for it was several hours before the captains of some of the LSTs were satisfied that their ships were clean—the liaison officers and Army interpreters were standing on the deck of the 1300, waiting for a small boat to take them out to the destroyer. One of the liaison officers said, "God deliver me from ever doing *that* job again." I heard the voice of Lieutenant Jackson back in the shadows of the quarterdeck. "It wasn't so bad," he said. "I didn't mind it so much."

—JOHN HERSEY

(*This is the second part of a two-part article.*)

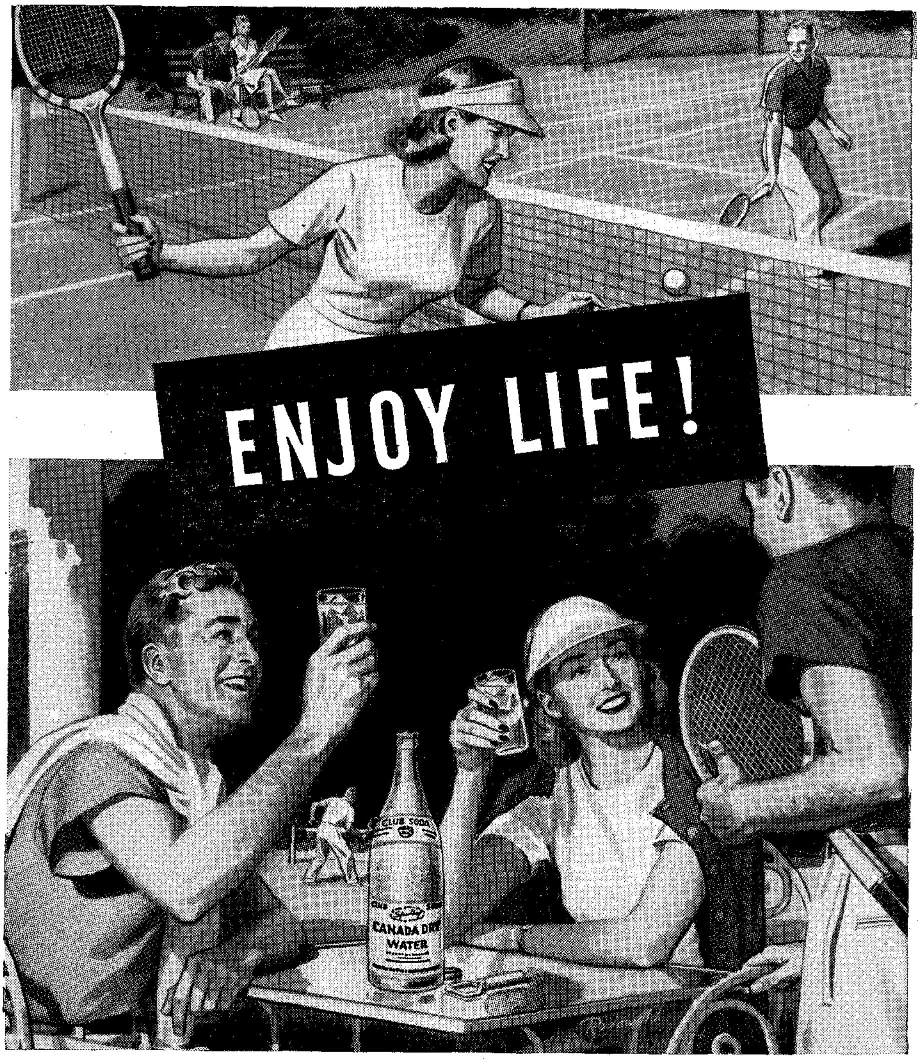
•

WHICH PAGE OF THE DETROIT "NEWS" D'YA READ?

"I feel fine now—better than I have for some time," said Greenberg. "The doctors said I had a stomach disorder and I'm giving up cigarets and coffee. I never was much of a smoker anyway. I'm sleeping better now and I feel much better."—*April 15, 1946, page 17.*

HANK GREENBERG GOES
ALL OUT FOR RALEIGHS!

"There's no hocus-pocus about it!" says Hank Greenberg, baseball's home-run star. "I've read the reports, and Medical Science has *proved* you can't beat Raleighs for *less nicotine . . . less throat irritants* . . . all-round *safer smoking!* I recommend Raleighs to all my friends. Raleighs are right!"—*Same issue, page 23.*



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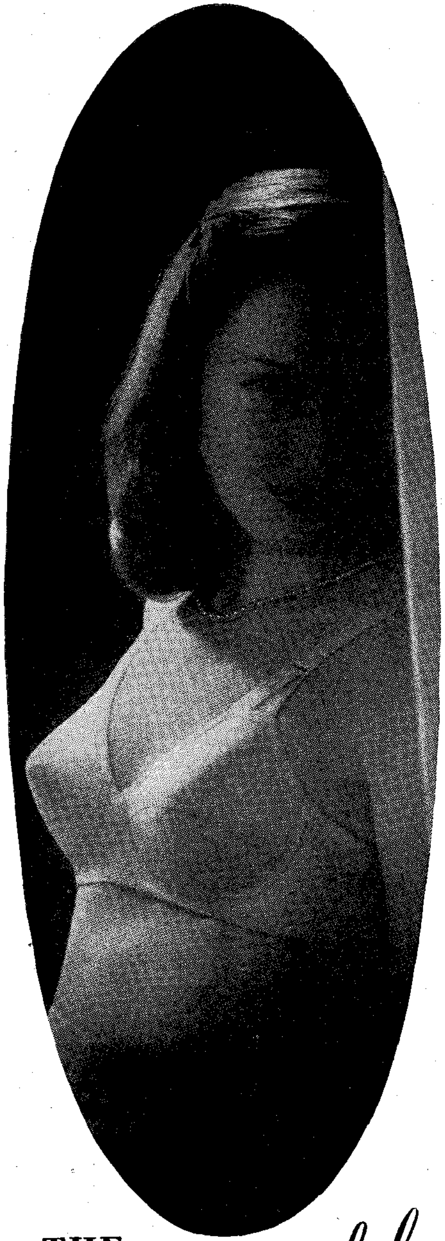

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ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

ABOUT THE HOUSE

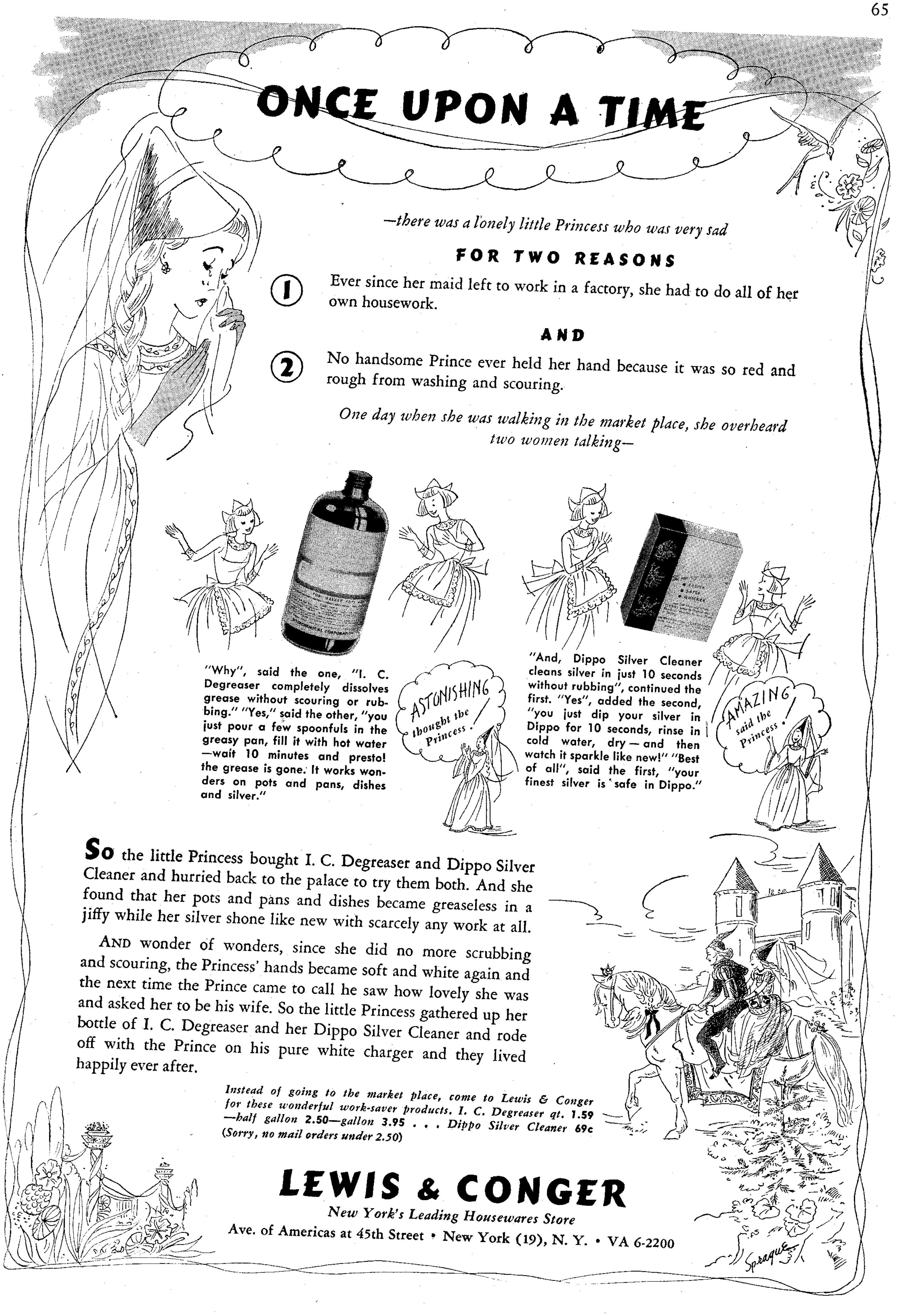
THE gardening urge, already stirred by this year's International Flower Show at Grand Central Palace, ought to be whipped up even further by the recent and unexpected arrival in the stores of a satisfying assortment of gardeners' tools and aids. Apparently, the makers of such things kept quiet about what they were up to until the implements were ready. The most impressive of the new mechanical helpers is a lawn sprinkler called the Trav-El-Awn. It looks like an overgrown bug, and it crawls like one. That is to say, when you attach it to the open end of a garden hose and turn the water on, the little prodigy, activated by a mechanism which I won't try to explain, starts working its way back to the faucet, dragging the hose behind it and spraying exuberantly as it goes. The machine takes its own sweet time, moving slowly enough to ensure a decent soaking for the area it covers. What's more, the thing will shut itself off when it gets to the faucet. In short, you can, as the makers put it so succinctly in their instructions, set it and forget it. If you want a Trav-El-Awn, and don't think it will frighten the kiddies, you can find one at Gimbel or Macy for $34.95.

LEWIS & CONGER's garden department has a rotary sprinkler which sprays in a square pattern instead of the conventional circle. This possibly sounds like an unnecessary sprinkling refinement, but after all, lawns are rarely circular, and an ordinary sprinkler, in order to reach all the corners of your lawn, has to rain out of bounds somewhere—on the terrace furniture, in the cellar windows, on the tennis court, or some other inconvenient place. Anyway, the square sprinkler has its uses, and it's yours for $3.49.

Lewis & Conger also have two versions of plastic garden hose in the usual twenty-five- and fifty-foot lengths: a grass-green kind ($6.95 and $12.95) that is guaranteed for two years, and a transparent edition, faintly tinged with amber ($7.95 and $14.95), with a five-year guarantee. You have only to heft a coil of either of these hoses to learn why they should appeal to women gardeners. In comparison with rubber hoses, they're featherweights, and they won't kink. They're also said to be impervious to sun and weather. An old favorite which hasn't been seen around the shops since before the war is also available at Lewis & Conger—the practical Soil Soaker, a hose made of porous canvas, through which the water seeps steadily instead of sluicing out of one end, to make puddles and wash away your hard-earned top-soil. The canvas hose can be coiled around the bases of newly planted trees and shrubs or strung out through a flower border. It costs $1.90 for an eighteen-foot length, $2.90 for a thirty-foot length, and $4.75 for a fifty-foot length.

PROBABLY the most heartening news of the season for gardeners is that the Feller-Jones people are out with a powder form of DDT which you just mix with water to make a garden-bug spray. It's called Kilaway, and both Lewis & Conger and Hammacher Schlemmer have it. Of course, the first question that is, or ought to be, on the tip of every gardener's tongue is whether it will knock out Japanese beetles. The answer, or at least the F.-J. answer, is yes (although I still can't believe anything less vehement than a baseball bat will do them in). Feller-Jones have also anticipated the inevitable second query, and are ready with a statement, backed up by the Department of Agriculture, that such desirable creatures as birds, earthworms, and honeybees are no more affected by Kilaway, if it is applied according to directions, than they are by the arsenical sprays people have been using for years. You mustn't, it seems, spray Kilaway on open blossoms, for that might be bad for the bees, but aside from that, you use it as you would any of the familiar garden sprays. Feller-Jones also put out FleaGo, a DDT flea powder for dogs—but not for cats, who have the prim habit of licking themselves clean. It seems to me that a dog might also take a notion to lick a powder out of its coat, but extensive experiments, I've been told, have been conducted with FleaGo and none of the dogs complained. FleaGo, too, is at both L. & C. and H. S.

CHARLES HAIGHT's current group of model rooms at Altman has been called "It's a Dream World," which might, I suppose, lead you to suspect that the rooms are bedrooms. They


ASTONISHING thought the Princess!
AMAZING said the Princess!
Sprague

ONCE UPON A TIME

—there was a lonely little Princess who was very sad

FOR TWO REASONS

① Ever since her maid left to work in a factory, she had to do all of her own housework.

AND

② No handsome Prince ever held her hand because it was so red and rough from washing and scouring.

One day when she was walking in the market place, she overheard two women talking—

"Why", said the one, "I. C. Degreaser completely dissolves grease without scouring or rubbing." "Yes," said the other, "you just pour a few spoonfuls in the greasy pan, fill it with hot water —wait 10 minutes and presto! the grease is gone. It works wonders on pots and pans, dishes and silver."

"And, Dippo Silver Cleaner cleans silver in just 10 seconds without rubbing", continued the first. "Yes", added the second, "you just dip your silver in Dippo for 10 seconds, rinse in cold water, dry — and then watch it sparkle like new!" "Best of all", said the first, "your finest silver is safe in Dippo."

So the little Princess bought I. C. Degreaser and Dippo Silver Cleaner and hurried back to the palace to try them both. And she found that her pots and pans and dishes became greaseless in a jiffy while her silver shone like new with scarcely any work at all.

AND wonder of wonders, since she did no more scrubbing and scouring, the Princess' hands became soft and white again and the next time the Prince came to call he saw how lovely she was and asked her to be his wife. So the little Princess gathered up her bottle of I. C. Degreaser and her Dippo Silver Cleaner and rode off with the Prince on his pure white charger and they lived happily ever after.

Instead of going to the market place, come to Lewis & Conger for these wonderful work-saver products. I. C. Degreaser qt. **1.59** *—half gallon* **2.50**—*gallon* **3.95** *. . . Dippo Silver Cleaner* **69c** *(Sorry, no mail orders under 2.50)*

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are. The one I think anybody might be happy to retire to for life is a room for Grandmother. It has a feeling of deep quiet, largely induced by a wall-to-wall carpet, subdued coloring, and some of the most restful-looking furniture I've seen in a long time. The master bedroom is equally well thought out. A four-poster bed completely covered, posts and all, with white damask may seem excessively startling and different, but everything else in the room, however revolutionary, is handsome and simple—notably, a table big enough to hold a dinner service for two; a second table, also expansive, placed in a bay window with two lounge chairs drawn up to it and a big hassock between them; and a tall, beautiful Sheraton sideboard which doubles as a dressing table. (Decorators are beginning to find out that women nowadays seldom take the time to sit down to do their hair, in spite of the frilly little tables with easel mirrors you see in most dressing rooms.) Above this Sheraton dressing table is a whopping mirror, hung on the wall, and in front of it is a giant stool, upholstered like a hassock, which is too high to sit on but just the right height to lean back against while you're working on yourself. If your problem is keeping the younger generation home nights, you can find some pointers in a room Mr. Haight has designed for two boys and in another he has fixed up for a young girl. —B. B.

•

5:00 P.M.—WRC—Symphony: Franco Autori, former conductor of Buffalo Symphony, opens the spring and summer session of the NBC Orchestra with "The Firebug," by Stravinsky.—*Washington Daily News.*

Walk to it—DO NOT RUN.

•

The Club is operated very strictly to insure utmost respectability and safety. My policy is so strict that a man may not have his arm resting on the back of a lady's chair, even if he is not touching her.—*Adv. of a social club in the Bronx Home News.*

You mean to say you have men and ladies in the *same room*?

•

THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN AD MAN

[*From an advertisement of "Denver Murders," published by Duell, Sloan & Pearce, in Publishers' Weekly*]

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THE ART GALLERIES

Mostly Women

IN 1915, Georgia O'Keeffe, now the subject of a concise and quite impressive retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, was teaching art at a small South Carolina college and, being more than half convinced that that was all she was going to get out of life, wasn't any too happy about it. A year later, when she was twenty-nine, she was brought, by one of those happy accidents, into contact with the very world of metropolitan galleries and museums that she had thought was closed to her. A friend to whom she had sent some drawings showed them to Alfred Stieglitz, then proprietor of the thoroughly *avant-garde* "291" Gallery. Stieglitz liked them, showed them, and O'Keeffe's career was under way. It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if this accidental contact hadn't been made. My guess is that she would have gone on anyway. O'Keeffe wasn't naïve, either as a person or as a painter. The legend that she was self-taught is not true. She studied briefly at both the Chicago Art Institute and the Art Students League in New York. She knew a good deal about the Armory Show and she knew quite well what she wanted to do. Yet Stieglitz was probably the only dealer in New York at the time who could have had any appreciation of the abstract approach she was working on (the three pieces dated 1915 in the current showing are extremely "modern" in feeling), and the discouragement she almost certainly would have received from an old-line dealer might have weakened her confidence considerably. But she met Stieglitz, and whatever deflections or delays might otherwise have occurred in her development were avoided. She is now, of course, the most important living woman painter in America, and possibly in the world.

The new exhibition treats her career with the understanding that it deserves, but as so often happens with Modern Museum retrospectives, the affair is an encomium rather than a real investigation. Instead of trying to show her truly, the attempt is to show her favorably, and as a result there are a

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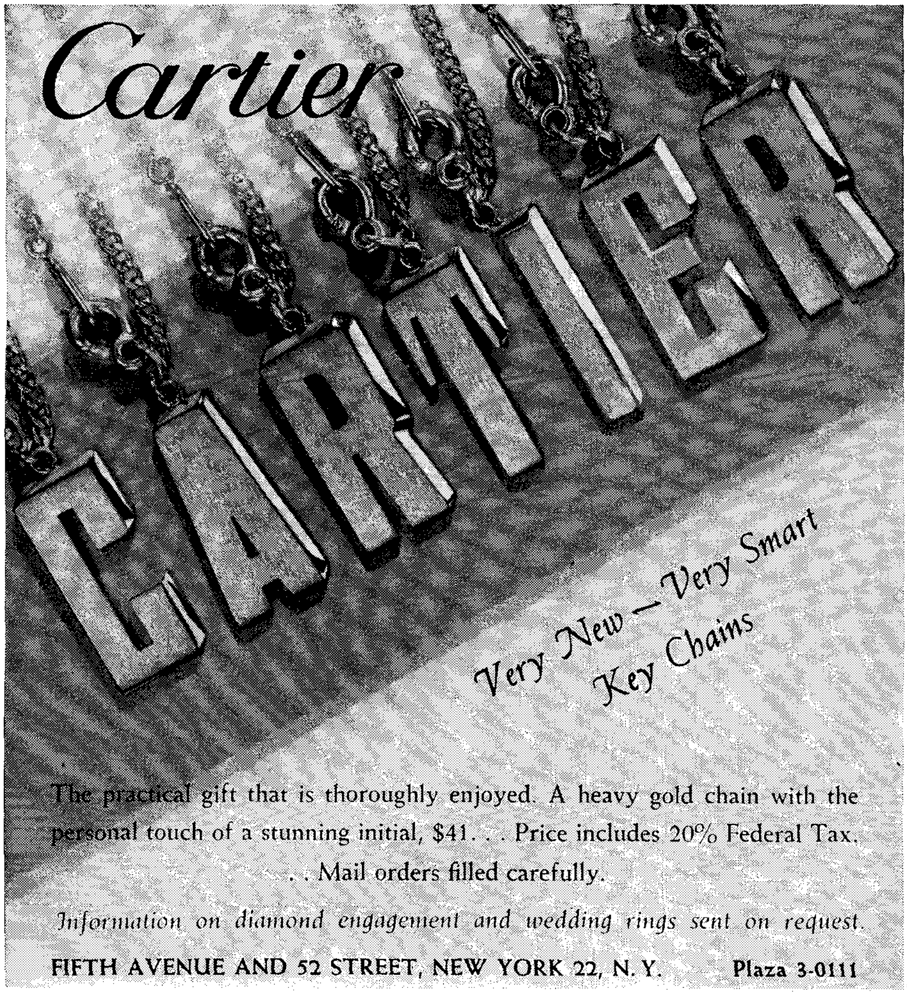

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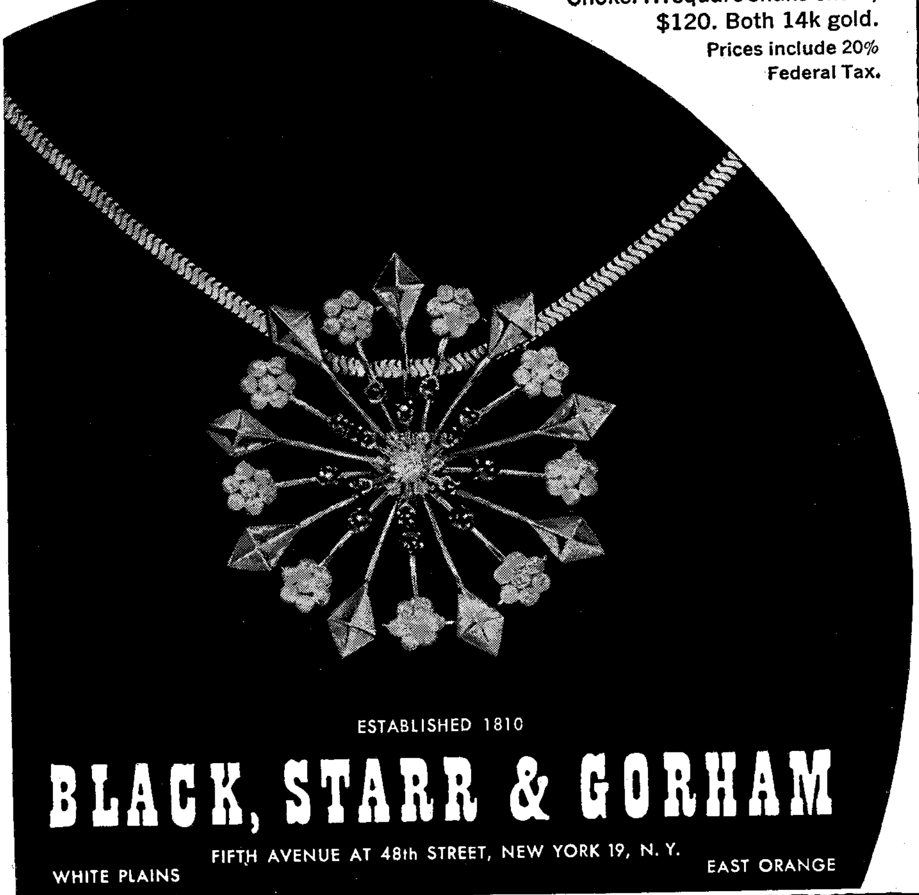

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couple of awkward phases in her development—notably, the time around 1930 when she was losing her interest in the East and centering it on Taos and the desert country, and having difficulty with her subject matter in consequence—which are either glossed over or ignored. There are some good phases, too—such as the period of those lovely little exploratory abstractions, done mainly around Lake George in the nineteen-twenties—which are given scant attention, so I suppose the balance is about even. And if the collection skimps on O'Keeffe's aberrations, it does trace the main course of her career admirably. There has always been a paradox at the basis of O'Keeffe's art, and one of the great virtues of the show is that it keeps this paradox constantly in focus. There is in her work, on the one hand, an intense exaltation of purity (note the fondness for white in so many of her pictures, such as the "Open Clam Shell" of 1926, the "Cow's Skull with Calico Roses," and "Abstraction—White Rose"). On the other hand, there is an emphasis on the sexual (see her "Jack in the Pulpit" and "Black Iris," among others) that is at times so direct as to be almost embarrassing, particularly because in her earlier work it seems to be completely unconscious.

The split is one that goes too deep to be encompassed by the mere mention of a few pictures. It runs through her whole production, and the tensions resulting from the tug of these two divergent impulses, I think, provide the main interest of her work. The genital references in her pictures have been frequently commented on, but the curiously virginal quality that underlies her work has not, and, as I've hinted before, the real reason for the brilliance of the show (and it is, really, brilliant) is that it plays one against the other with dramatic effect. Because of this, too, the last roomful of paintings, those from her later years, has an air of almost mystical culmination. It was when she went West, around 1930, that O'Keeffe really learned about the uses of space. Until then her work had been growing tighter and more meticulous, and at the last the meticulousness showed a tendency to trip over itself, as one peering too closely at the minutiae before him might end by tripping over a matchstick. But in the West, O'Keeffe broadened her vision, and her best work since then, while losing none of its intensity, has gained immensely in majesty and power. Here, again, the show stacks the cards a little in her favor. O'Keeffe has been coasting a good deal these past few years—as, considering her production, she has a right to do—but the show ignores the occasional dull spots and repetitions that have resulted. It focusses on the highlights, and in "Blue and Red Hills," "Pelvis with the Distance," "Pelvis Series, No. 3," and "Black Place, No. 1," all dated from 1943 to 1945, it shows us paintings of really great stature.

THE twenty-second Annual of the New York Society of Women Artists is housed in the National Academy, but it is nowhere near so conventional and academic as this might lead you to think. It is, in fact, a quite lively event, and the sculpture—Doris Caesar, Clara Shainess, Cleo Hartwig, and Ellen Key-Oberg all show interesting pieces—is especially worth seeing. . . . At the Pierre Matisse is an exhibition that is of unusual importance, for it contains the first paintings received here from major French artists since the war cut off communications. Picasso ("Still Life with Candle"), Rouault and Matisse (each with three canvases), and even the aged Bonnard are represented, along with two newer men, Jean Dubuffet and André Marchand, to show what some of the younger generation are doing. . . . Another happy accident, like the discovery of Georgia O'Keeffe in 1915, is being recorded at the Julien Levy with a first one-man show of paintings by Gar Sparks, a New Jersey artist, now in his late fifties. Mr. Sparks, too, is no primitive; he is a very conscious artist, and his paintings are a curious mixture of oblique social references, in which factory chimneys are contrasted with fragments of classical sculpture, and a pearly sort of Golden Age setting and atmosphere, in which the space around the figures comes to be more important than the figures. This, I realize, is an inconclusive description, but since the paintings aren't titled, I can't particularize further. The work, though, seems to me to be of considerable interest. —ROBERT M. COATES

◆

DEPT. OF UTTER CONFUSION

[*From the Nashville Tennessean*]

An American soldier serving in the jail last October said Conti, in a chair, tied a shirt sleeve around a fit of despondency, climbed on his neck, fastened the shirt to one of six metal spikes stuck in the wall around the window of his solitary cell and then slumped off the chair.

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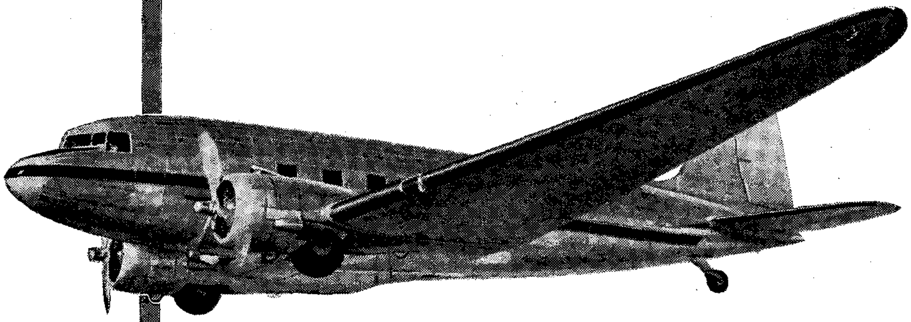

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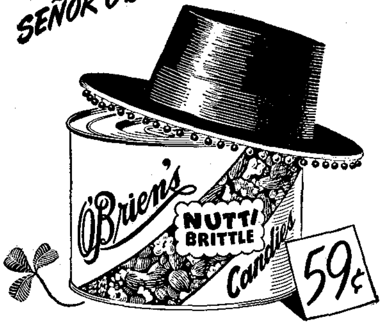
Gracias, amigos

SEÑOR O'BRIEN from San José



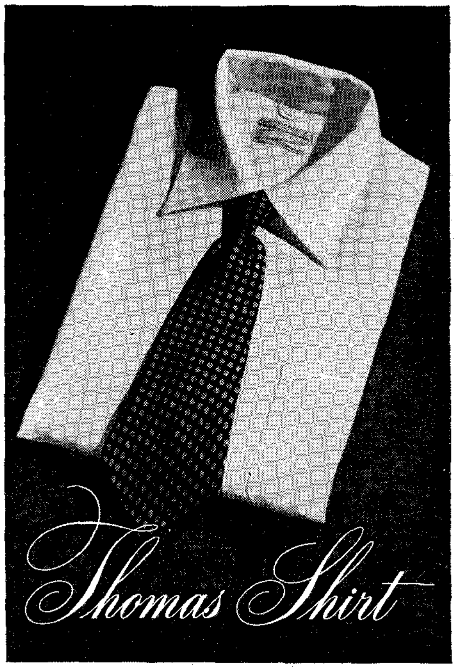
WHEREVER YOU BUY GOOD CANDY

THE CURRENT CINEMA

Give Our Child a Name

THE Lord knows how many oceans of tears have been shed for those sad ladies of the screen who have borne a child without benefit of clergy and spend the rest of their lives dolefully watching foster parents rear their offspring. I remember contributing my own pailful of grief to the spate of melancholy excited by "Stella Dallas," in which the heroine got herself in a somewhat similar jam years ago, and I managed to summon up a few sniffles for Helen Hayes when she appeared in "The Sin of Madelon Claudet," back in 1931. But with the passage of time, I've grown a bit weary of the plaints of these ladies and their illicit get, which were summarized by Ring Lardner in "June Moon" when he wrote, "All I ask is give our child a name—I mean a last name." The latest mother to seek that elusive last name for her little one is Olivia De Havilland, in "To Each His Own." Miss De Havilland first appears in the film as a middle-aged American spinster in London who operates a cosmetic outfit roughly the size of Elizabeth Arden's. She is plainly unhappy, and in a series of flashbacks we find out why. Her virtue and an aviator both disappear one morning in 1918, after a bond rally in a small town in upper New York. The product of this speedy amour is a bouncing boy, who is left on a doorstep and presently adopted by a pianola manufacturer. Determined to reclaim her son someday, Miss De Havilland proceeds to Manhattan, where she starts confecting cold cream and making lots of money. Finally, she's in a position to retrieve her young one from the pianola manufacturer, but the boy doesn't like her or her apartment and she finally sends him home again. After that, she lights out for London, where, of course, she eventually meets up with her son, wearing wings like his father before him.

Miss De Havilland's performance in "To Each His Own" is frequently superb, and it's rather a shame that it had to be wasted on the worn clichés of this plot. John Lund, who plays both her seducer and her son, is sturdily virile, although he bats his eyelashes around as if they were butterfly nets. Also on



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hand, and appropriately lugubrious, are Roland Culver, Phillip Terry, Bill Goodwin, and Virginia Welles.

CLIFTON WEBB, so happily cast in "Laura," plays the same sort of aesthetic menace in "The Dark Corner," but the script doesn't give him much chance to show what he can do with a well-turned line or situation. Actually, he is something of a bore as an elderly art dealer darkly jealous of his brazen young wife. All the characters, in fact, are rather trying, from William Bendix, as a monster called White Shirt, to Lucille Ball, as the sympathetic secretary of the detective of the piece, played by Mark Stevens. Fashioned along simple mystery lines, "The Dark Corner" includes the usual murder, blackmail, and man hunt, with Mr. Bendix supplying the brutality that Hollywood seems to find so necessary for this kind of thing. —JOHN MCCARTEN

•

To IOWA ON HER CENTENNIAL

To the Open Forum Editor:

To Iowa on her one hundredth birthday, the banner state of our land.

To the Meadow Larks, the Thrush and all the singing birds, as they go flying through the air, giving her a serenade, joining in the chorus with threat splitting melody. This is to Iowa.

To her little pigs, calves and lambs, full of joy and mirth go frolicking and playing hand in hand. To her hogs, cattle and sheep, grazing peacefully o'er carpeted fields of green. To her prairie land endowed with sweet, yellow hay. To her fields of red clover, the fragrance filling the air. Little bees flitting from bloom to bloom—stealing the nectar for their honey comb.

To her yellow fields of rye, barley, oats, and wheat. I can see men reaping there, closing my eyes and trying to vision Ruth gleaning there. Lo! to behold, fields and fields of beautiful corn with tassels of gold, their graceful blades drinking in nature's pure sweet air as it tosses them to and fro.

Raising my eyes, to the glorious sky, repeating a prayer. Holding out my arms, awe to you Iowa. I give renown.—Laura Clayton Dolman, Panora, Ia.—*Des Moines Register.*

Awe to you, too, Madam.

•

INFATUATION WITH SOUND OF ONE'S OWN PENDING

[*Stanley Woodward in the Herald Tribune*]

Pending the arrival of Joe H. Palmer, who will come to the New York Herald Tribune Feb. 1 and ... —*Paragraph 2.*

Pending the arrival of Joe H. Palmer, who ... —*Paragraph 11.*

However, pending the arrival of Mr. Palmer ... —*Paragraph 12.*

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MY FRIEND VENUS

"MIND if I sit down with you?" I heard an American voice saying behind me one evening this spring in a crowded little restaurant in Havana. I looked around. An American sergeant, with overseas stripes and a discharge emblem, was standing back of my chair. "Don't seem to be a table free anywhere," he said. I told him to sit down, by all means. We introduced ourselves. He came, he said, from somewhere in Wisconsin. He ordered a Daiquiri and lit a big cigar. "Quite a town, Havana," he said. "I like it. Have you noticed how the fire engines carry a water tank along with them when they answer alarms? They tell me the water pressure's so low here they'd never put a fire out without their own tanks. You've noticed them, haven't you?"

I had to confess that I hadn't been paying much attention to Havana's fire engines.

"Well, I guess I've got an eye for such things," the sergeant said. "Only natural, I suppose, being a fireman myself—a kind of fireman, anyway."

I asked him what kind of fireman he was.

"Oh, just an honorary one," he said. "I'm an honorary member of the Paris Fire Department. You know—Paris, France?" And out of his pocket he took a badge which was indeed a French fire-department badge. "SP," it said, in large letters which served as the capital letters for "*Sapeurs-Pompiers*," which is French for firemen, and "*Sauver ou Périr*"—"Save or Perish"—the Department's motto.

I complimented him on his membership and told him that I'd often admired the speed and dash of the Paris *sapeurs-pompiers*, to say nothing of their shiny brass helmets. "Oh, I've got a helmet, too," he said proudly, "and a shield and a certificate. You lived in Paris before the war?" I nodded, and he shook his head wistfully. "I'd sure like to figure some way of getting back there," he said, "but I don't see how it's going to be done. If I couldn't do it from Germany or even from redeployment camp, I don't see how I'm going to do it from the States." His Daiquiri arrived at that moment, and he lifted it high in the air. "To Paris," he said, "goddam it." Raising the glass of Cuban beer I was drinking with my dinner, I joined him in his toast.

"I got to Paris one of the first days of the liberation," the sergeant said, "in the summer of '44. My folks speak German at home, so I can speak it, too, as well as a little high-school French, and the Army made me an interrogator of German prisoners. The first thing I had to do in Paris was to contact the commanding officer of the place where the French were holding the Germans who'd been captured in the city, and it turned out to be a big Fire Department headquarters and barracks near the Eiffel Tower. I told them who I was, and—well, I guess I don't have to tell you anything about the kind of welcome I got. It was the kind all Americans were getting those days, only more so. Those Frenchies didn't give me much time to do any interrogating. They cheered, shook hands with me and with each other, kissed me, made speeches, and brought out French and American flags and all kinds of bottles. The commanding officer was a Fire Department captain who'd also been captain of some outfit in the Resistance. The Germans had put him in prison for a while for forging papers, but he'd got out in time to help round the Germans up. He was a great big fellow with a black mustache—a pistol champion of France, once. Anyway, he kind of adopted me. After a lot of celebrating at the barracks, he took me to his house and introduced me to his family, and *they* brought out all kinds of food and liquor they'd been hiding for years and we had a feast that nearly killed me. The next day I did a little interrogating of Germans in between going to the top of the Arc de Triomphe and a lot of other places with the captain and more celebrating at the barracks, and the *next* day, the third day, they had the ceremony that made me an honorary fireman."

"What was it like?" I asked. "A formal affair, or just a friendly presentation, or what?"

The sergeant grinned a bit sheepishly at my question. By this time he had finished his first Daiquiri and was busy on a second one, which I had signalled the waiter to bring. "To tell you the truth," he said, "I don't remember the ceremony as clearly as I might. I know the firemen were drawn up in some kind of a formation in the courtyard of the barracks, and the captain made a speech and I know I made one, and I think there was some more kissing, but it's

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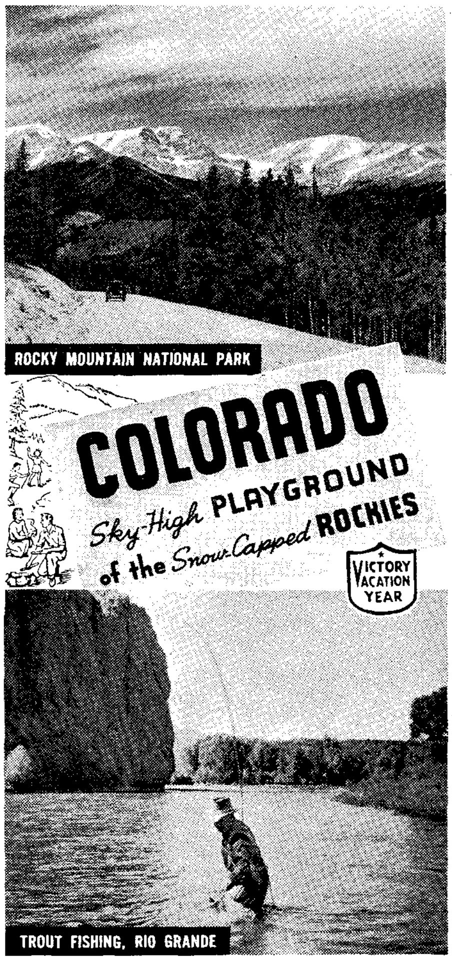
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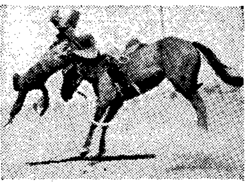
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all kind of blurred in my mind. You see, there was a lunch first, and we all had a lot of wine, and it was a hot day—"

I said I could well understand.

"Anyway," he said, "I got my badge and helmet and all the rest of it. So I'm a fireman. I never did get to a fire, but I've kind of noticed firemen and fire-department equipment ever since, wherever I've been. Everything seems to be pretty up-to-date in Havana," he said. "Reminds me of Paris a little."

"Did being a fireman give you any privileges?" I asked. "Did it get you into any places in Paris you couldn't have got into otherwise, or anything?"

The sergeant hesitated a moment, puffing on his cigar. "Well," he said, "yes, in a way. I mean—well, you see, after the ceremony, the next few days kind of quieted down. The captain had to go to Chartres, I think it was, to do some Resistance business there and I did quite a little interrogating. Then the captain came back and asked me what I'd been doing, and when I said, 'Working,' he invited me to a show. So we went. It turned out to be something like the 'Folies-Bergère'—you know, a French girl show. We stopped in the bar first and had some champagne, and then we started to leave the theatre—or at least that's what I thought. 'Can't we catch some of the show, since we're here?' I asked him, and he just smiled and said, 'Come with me.' So we went out the door he was headed for and down a passageway and in another door, and there we were, backstage. Firemen have the right to go backstage, you know. Somebody came up to me and asked me what I was doing there, and the captain said I was with him, and that I had a badge of my own anyway.

"The damn thing was," the sergeant went on, "the whole place back there was full of naked women. Full of 'em! Ninety-nine and a half per cent naked is the best way I can describe it. And out on the stage, just a few feet from where we were standing, they were doing a number that was called 'The Goddesses,' and all the Goddesses were naked, too, and as we stood there, the number ended and they all walked off the stage right past us. The captain asked me which one I thought was the prettiest, and I said, 'Venus'—I knew that's what she was, because that's all she wore, a little sign saying so. So he called her over and introduced me. 'Mademoiselle Vénus,' he said, 'here's a young American soldier who's just

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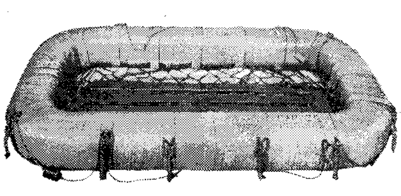

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been made an honorary *sapeur-pompier* because of his great services to France during the liberation,' and he made me show her my badge. So Venus was very friendly and nice, and we talked, and I invited her out for a ride in a horse cab, and she accepted, and—well, one thing led to another and—well, we became good friends.

"Yep, she was my friend Venus," he said proudly. "That's what I always called her. She told me she liked me very much. She wouldn't want me for a husband, she said; she'd only want a French husband. She said Frenchmen are more tolerant about marriage. I told her that was O.K. with me as long as we could keep on being friends. That's what they call it, you know—*amis*. She said I could be her friend as long as I was in Paris. So I was. After a few weeks I had to leave, and I asked her to write to me, but she said she never wrote letters. You have to hand it to her. She told me frankly in advance she wouldn't write, and she didn't. She said I should just come back when I could, and we'd be friends again. But I never was able to. Not even from redeployment camp." The sergeant sighed heavily and drained his glass.

I EXPRESSED my regrets at his inability to rejoin his friend and suggested that the time had come for him to start ordering his dinner. A bowl of good Cuban soup, I said, would make him feel a lot better. He called the waiter and ordered the soup—or, rather, I ordered it for him, since the effects of his second Daiquiri were beginning to make things like ordering a little difficult for him. He was clearly of a buoyant character, though; by the time I got up to leave him, my dinner finished, he was pretty much himself again. "Good night," he said. "I enjoyed talking about Paris. You know, I felt restless when I was discharged, so I thought I'd make this trip down here before going out home to Wisconsin. Somebody told me they call Havana the Paris of the Caribbean. And you know, that's not a bad name for it. I don't mean only the Fire Department, either," he said. "I like a lot of things about this town."

—FRANCIS STEEGMULLER

•

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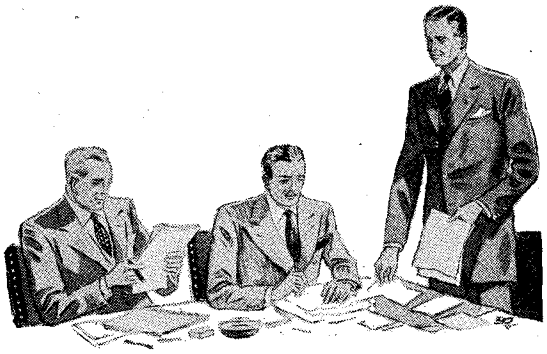

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THE RACE TRACK

Consolation Prize

TO a lot of people, the Withers Stakes, won by Hampden at Belmont last weekend, seemed a sort of consolation affair for three-year-olds who had finished behind Assault earlier in the season. Seven of the eight runners had been beaten by him at one time or another. The general certainty about Hampden's ability to win wasn't surprising; after all, he had been second in the Wood Memorial, third in the Kentucky Derby, and third in the Preakness. Horseplayers who backed him down to odds-on were right for once, because he came in five lengths ahead of Natchez, with Perfect Bahram a distant third. Incidentally, first money was $20,320, which is quite a consolation, at that. I would say that Hampden, who is a well-made dark bay colt by Heliopolis and runs in the colors of William du Pont, Jr.'s, Foxcatcher Farm, is one of the better milers around. He did the Withers mile in 1:36. Only Man o' War, Snob II, and Johnstown, all exceptionally fast horses, ever bettered that time in this particular race, and they all ran it only a fifth of a second faster. What's more, the track on Saturday looked muddy, although it was officially recorded as fast, and a cold, heavy mist fell during most of the afternoon. Nevertheless, Natchez, who set the early pace, ran the first half mile in 0:45⅕, and Hampden, taking command on the turn, was clocked at 1:10⅗ for six furlongs. Natchez didn't impress me so much as he did in the Preakness.

You might as well know that First Flight, who won the Fashion two weeks ago and finished second in the Juvenile on Saturday, is my favorite filly of the year and I intend to leave no alibi unturned whenever she's beaten. Consequently, I can say that I wouldn't have run her against colts so early in the season; the Juvenile was rather a large order. Also, she didn't leave the starting gate so nimbly as she did in the Fashion, and she swerved to the rails, where the footing is much deeper than it is in the middle of the track. Any trainer will tell you that to draw a post position near the rail—she drew No. 2—is practically an unbeatable handicap. Still, she didn't run too badly, though she could never catch up with Eternal War, who had won the Youthful at Jamaica.

Despite the threatened railroad strike and the English racing weather (Colonel Martingale says that Belmont gets Newmarket's Craven Meeting weather on reverse lend-lease), more of a crowd than anyone expected turned out to see the Withers and the Juvenile. The turnstile count was 40,951. Apparently the only effect of the railroad troubles was the track's decision to shorten the intervals between races by ten minutes, so that the special trains would be back in town before the deadline for the walkout.

THE other afternoon, I dropped in at Max Hirsch's barn at Belmont to see whether the King Ranch stable really had a two-year-old as big as the clockers had reported. Well, it has. The animal's name is Vigilante; he is a black colt by Assault's papa, Bold Venture, out of Dawn Play, a good race mare of a decade ago, and he already stands sixteen hands three and three-eighths inches. Vigilante's height is unusual for a thoroughbred. Few horses grow to be more than sixteen hands; the average is about fifteen hands three inches, and you can count on your thumbs the ones of seventeen hands who have come to the races in the past ten years. To my unpracticed eye, Vigilante's conformation is so smooth and well balanced that he doesn't look oversized. What especially pleases his breeder, Bob Kleberg, is that the colt grew up normal and sound despite the fact that his mother died when he was four months old and the youngster had to be fed on a formula until he could be turned out to pasture. Neither his owner nor his trainer has the slightest idea when Vigilante will go to the post. Although he shows remarkably smooth action in his brief gallops, he is not going to be hurried in his training. By the way, travelling is going to be something of a problem for him when he grows up. Even this spring, when he was sent north from Texas, he was too big to ride in a regular horse car. Kleberg got him up here in a cattle car.

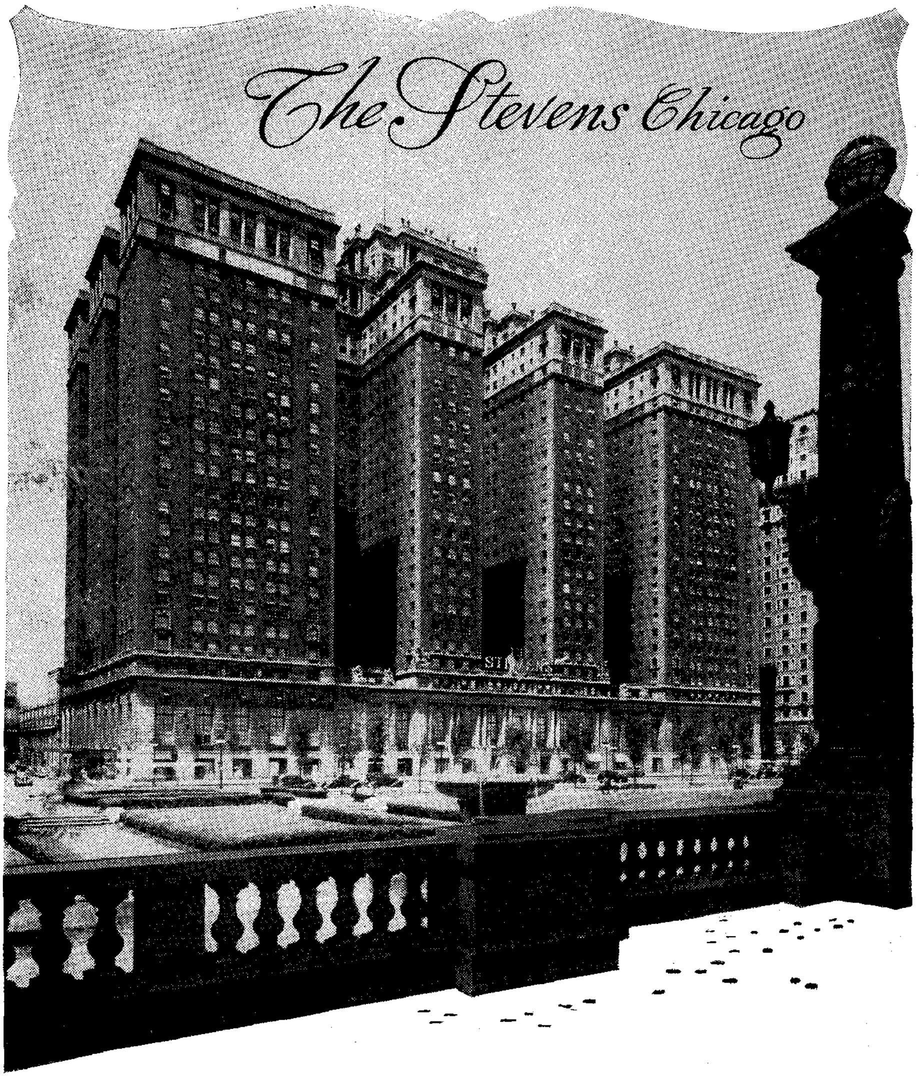
—AUDAX MINOR

•

THE GOOD OLD DAYS DEPARTMENT

[*From "The Great Mouthpiece," by Gene Fowler*]

Nor would Mr. Fallon patronize the laundry. Whenever his linen became soiled, he threw it away, purchasing a new supply as needed.



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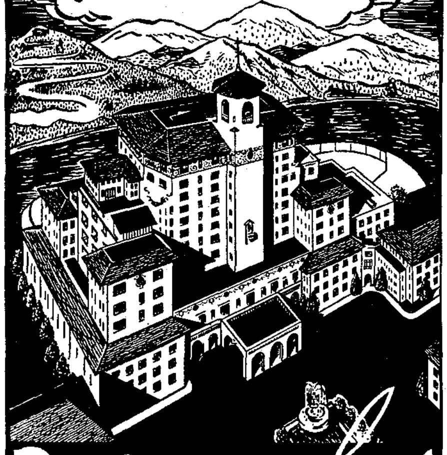

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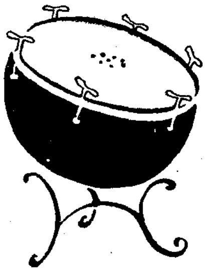
MUSICAL EVENTS

At the City Center



THE New York City Opera Company last week presented at the City Center two new additions to its repertory—"The Pirates of Penzance" and "Madama Butterfly"—and I'm glad to report that they both were definite successes. "The Pirates of Penzance" was especially interesting because of its staging by Eugene S. Bryden, who risked the frowns of the old-line Savoyards by disregarding most of the traditional devices. Mr. Bryden showed diverting originality and freshness in his technique, notably in his amusing treatment of the song "Poor Wandering One," in which the soprano's coloratura singing was unconventionally handled as comedy. I wasn't quite so enthusiastic about the occasional determinedly funny outbreaks of back-slapping and wobbly-legged manifestations of terror or the overemphasis of the entertainment value of having people sit on one another's knees. Discounting these too zealous efforts at physical humor, the operetta was an exceptionally gay and well-paced piece of stagecraft. It was good musically, too. The conductor, Julius Rudel, whom I hadn't seen before, took charge of things with snap and finesse. The singing, all told, was clean and clear, and I was particularly struck by John Dudley's fetching impersonation of that astonishing father and soldier, Major-General Stanley.

The performance of "Madama Butterfly" introduced Camilla Williams, a young Negro soprano, who made her first appearance on any operatic stage in the pleasing, and taxing, role of the unfortunate heroine. The début was a triumph for Miss Williams, whose inexperience didn't lessen the effectiveness of her singing and acting. She had fine collaboration from an expert cast, and Laszlo Halasz's conducting was alert and enthusiastic. There were a few bobbles in the orchestra and on the stage, but they didn't impede the sweep and charm of Puccini's music. Mr. Bryden's direction was again noteworthy for a variety of unusual touches. The scenery, by H. A. Condell, who also supplied a helpful background for "The Pirates,"

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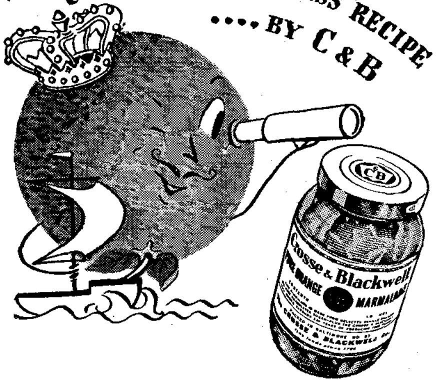

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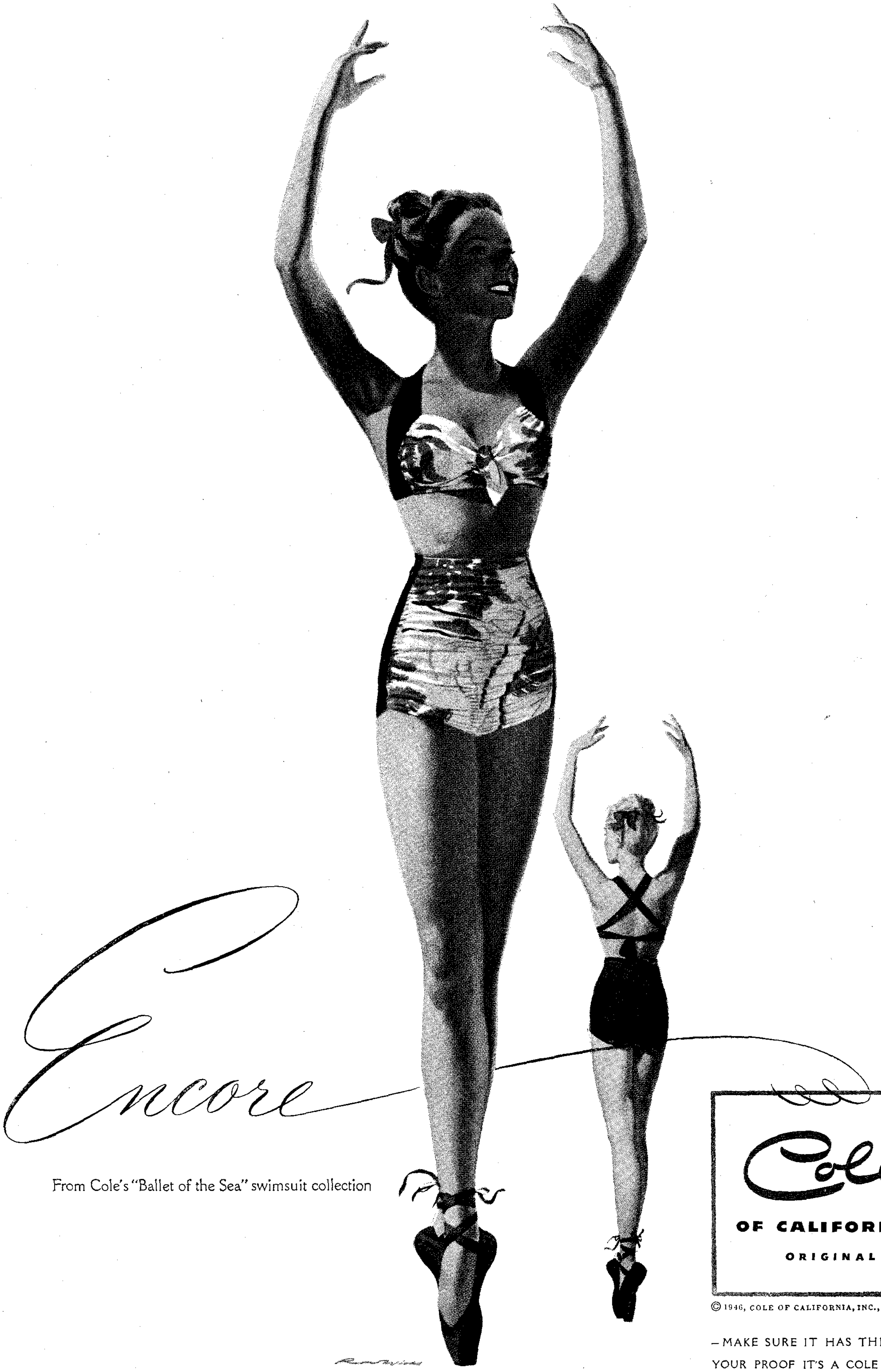

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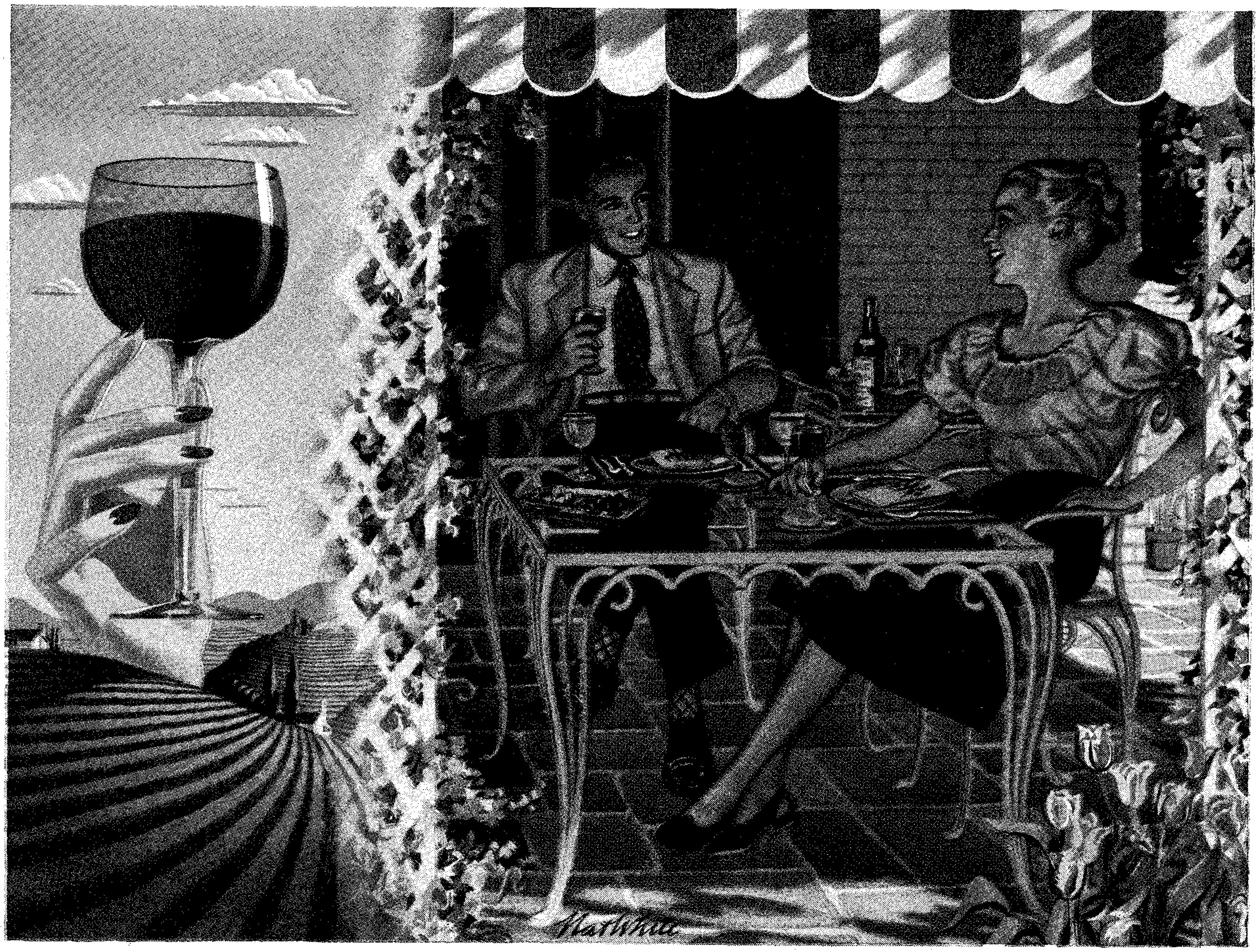

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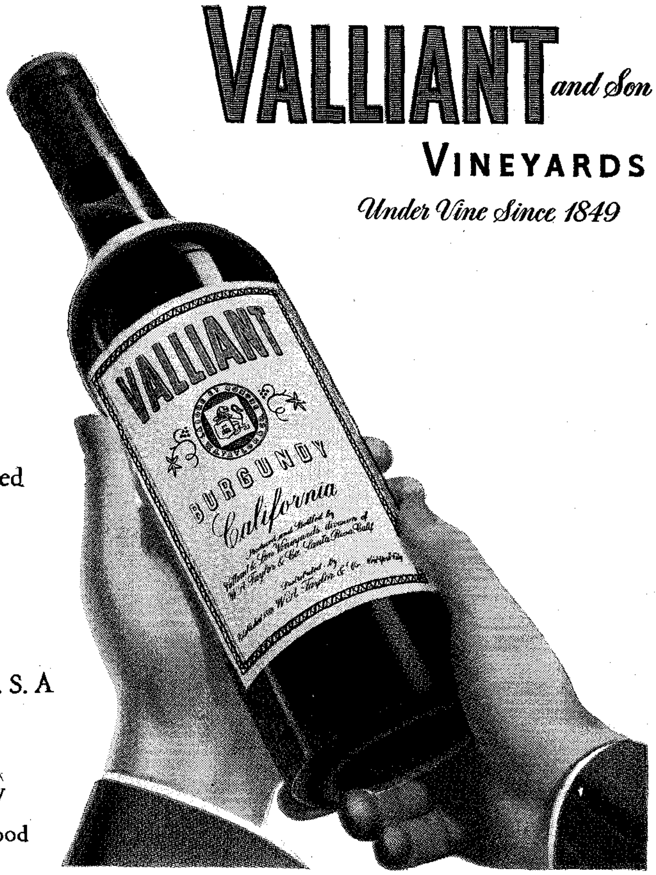

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was an ingenious variation on the customary setting for the opera and worked out admirably. In the finale of the second scene, however, the lighting seemed to have been miscalculated and the tableau of Butterfly waiting for her husband's return was obscure.

BETWEEN operas last week, the City Center was the scene of an absorbing concert by the Collegiate Chorale, which, under Robert Shaw's brilliant leadership, scored another of its many successes. The principal offering was "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," a long work for chorus, soloists, and orchestra, composed by Paul Hindemith on commission from the Chorale. It is impressive music, written with Mr. Hindemith's great mastery of form and with tremendous skill and clarity in the treatment of instruments and voices. Like many recent choral works, it uses its text—in this case, a condensation of Walt Whitman's poem—as a springboard rather than as a literal libretto. The audience greeted the performers, the music, and the composer rousingly; there is no doubt that the Chorale has received from Mr. Hindemith an important addition to our music for voices and orchestra.

Earlier in the evening, Mr. Shaw directed two lovely and little-known excerpts from Schubert, as well as an assortment of delightful music by Francis Poulenc, whose "Petites Voix," sung by fifteen women, was delightful, humorous, and sometimes moving. Poulenc's "Litanies à la Vierge Noire," with an apposite orchestration by Louise Talma, was distinguished for its expressiveness and an unobtrusive suggestion of the archaic.

—ROBERT A. SIMON

•

BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

[*From a booklet about the Normanside Country Club, Elsmere, N. Y.*]

After having weathered the war years under reefed sails, Normanside has emerged sound as a dollar—and, with all sails set and a spanking breeze behind her, is heading into 1946 with her pennant flying. . . . A new crew has taken over for 1946—and all posts are manned for a record run. A new set of officers, a new board of governors, and a hand-picked group of committee chairmen already are operating like a well-oiled machine. Committee members, full of pent-up enthusiasm, are straining at the leash, and those in command have taken their feet off the accelerator and are already reaching frantically for the brakes. New members are climbing aboard—and 1946 will see the roster filled as of yore.

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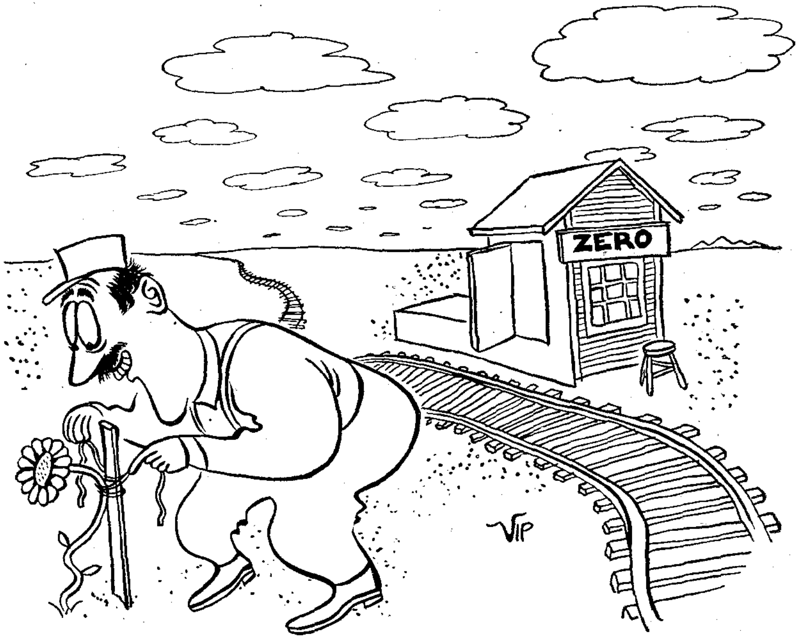

But it's only fair to admit that there are a few stretches of country along our tracks which, to paraphrase Gray's *Elegy*, "were born to blush unseen." We can't mention them by name because the chambers of commerce in these barren spots are just as proud as any others, and we don't want to offend them.

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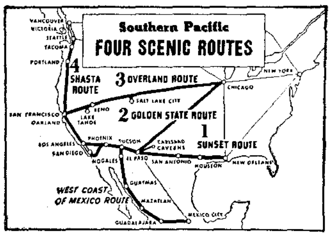

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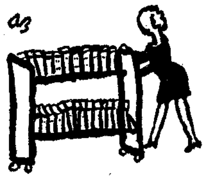
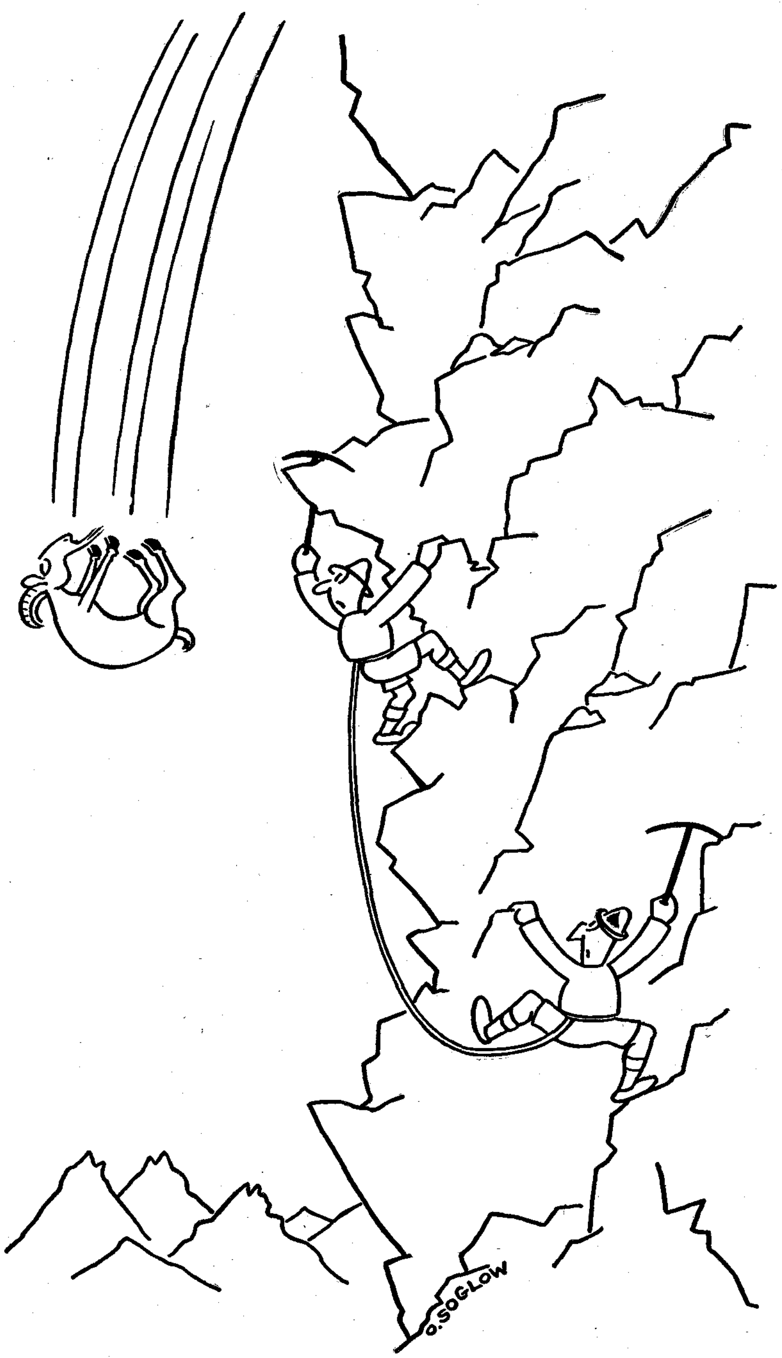
BOOKS

George Orwell's Cricketing Burglar—James M. Cain's Horse Opera



I HAVE heard it said in England of George Orwell that he was "a combination of Leftism and Blimpism." This is perfectly true, and, with his talent as essayist, journalist, and novelist, it has made him a unique figure among the radical intellectuals of the turbid thirties and forties. It has also made him sometimes slightly ridiculous, but his not fearing to appear ridiculous is one of the good things about him. He does not belong to the literary world of liberal and radical opinion which has mastered all the right sets of answers and slips easily into all the right attitudes. His thought is often inconsistent; his confident predictions often turn out untrue; a student of international socialism, he is at the same time irreducibly British and even not free from a certain provincialism; and one frequently finds him quite unintelligent about matters that are better understood by less interesting and able critics. But, with all this, he has the good English qualities that, in the literary field at any rate, are beginning to seem old-fashioned: readiness to think for himself, courage to speak his mind, the tendency to deal with concrete realities rather than theoretical positions, and a prose style that is both downright and disciplined. If it is true that he has never succeeded in satisfactorily formulating a position, it is true, also, that his impulses (though they sometimes conflict), in pointing to what he does and he does not want, what he does and does not like, make, in their own way, a fairly reliable guide, for they suggest an ideal of the man of good will (to use an overworked and wistful phrase) still alive in a benumbed and corrupted world.

George Orwell's new book of essays—"Dickens, Dali & Others" (Reynal & Hitchcock)—contains some curious examples of his Blimpism and insularity. "What," he was asking in 1941, "has kept England on its feet during the past year? In part, no doubt, some vague idea about a better future, but chiefly the atavistic emotion of patriotism, the ingrained feeling of the English-speaking peoples that they are superior to foreigners. For the last twenty years the main object of English left-wing intellectuals has been to break this feeling down, and if they had succeeded, we might be watching the S.S. men patrolling the London streets at this moment." (But isn't it a part of the business of the socialists of whatever country to try to induce their compatriots to take an international point of view?) And later in the same essay: "The early Bolsheviks may have been angels or demons, according as one chooses to regard them, but at any rate they were not sensible men"—as if the political logic of the buckling social system in Russia, with no habit of democratic government and no powerful middle class, could give results that would commend themselves as "sensible" to a British civil servant of the class from which Orwell comes! In Orwell's essay on Dali, the code of the public school comes to the surface in an unexpected connection. In writing about the painter's autobiography, he calls attention to certain incidents which Dali says he remembers from his childhood: his pushing another boy off a bridge, his kicking his three-year-old sister in the head, and his biting a dying bat which was already covered with ants. These actions, Orwell suggests, which set the tone for Dali's whole career, are not precisely cricket. "In his outlook, in his character," Orwell writes, "the bedrock decency of a human being does not exist." Yet "if you say that Dali, though a brilliant draughtsman, is a dirty little scoundrel, you are looked upon as a savage." One's first impulse is to laugh at this, and to regret that the buffooneries of Dali, a professional creator of scandal, have succeeded in getting a rise out of Orwell, who has often shown himself so shrewd. The trouble is with Dali that his outrages are infantile and superficial. He hasn't the depth to be



really shocking. But, on reflection, one comes to the conclusion that this instinct on Orwell's part that is revolted by the pushing of the boy off the bridge and the biting of the dying bat is the same one that gagged at the Moscow trials, and that there is really some connection between the little and the big monstrosities. Both are symptoms of the moral disease that has invaded the contemporary world.

The progress of this disease Orwell shows in a remarkable paper, in which he is to be seen at his best, called "Raffles and Miss Blandish," a study of the change in the attitude toward crime between 1900 and 1939, as exemplified by two popular novelists. The gentleman burglar Raffles was, as Orwell points out, a cricketer, and, in his way, a man of honor; the characters in "No Orchids for Miss Blandish," a pseudo-American shocker which was prodigiously popular in England, have no honor of any kind and make an appeal merely sadistic and sexual. Orwell's essays on popular literature from a sociological point of view—"Boys' Weeklies," "The Art of Donald McGill" (a producer of comic picture postcards), and "In Defense of P. G. Wodehouse"—are always of special interest. This is a kind of thing that is rarely attempted, of which Orwell is, in fact, I believe, the only contemporary master. And when he deals with such more serious writers as Dickens, Kipling, Yeats, and Arthur Koestler, it is mainly from this semi-political, semi-sociological point of view. His essays on Dickens and Kipling to some extent suffer from a tendency to generalize about the first-rate writer, the whole work of a man's career, without following his development as an artist (as one can do about a serial in a boys' magazine, which, for decades, can remain the same), and from a habit of taking complex personalities too much at their face value, of not getting inside them enough. Orwell does not see, for example, that Dickens was more attracted than repelled by horror and violence. The novelist may seem to shudder at the revolutionary-mob scenes in "Barnaby Rudge" and "A Tale of Two Cities," but it is he, after all, who has let them loose, and it is plain that he is fascinated by them. And does Dickens not incorporate himself in, does he not really love and admire, the perverse and ogreish Quilp as he cannot do with Little Nell? Orwell does not, in this Dickens essay, seem to have gone over his ground quite thoroughly, for he makes points about Dickens' limitations which can easily be refuted by reference to obvious

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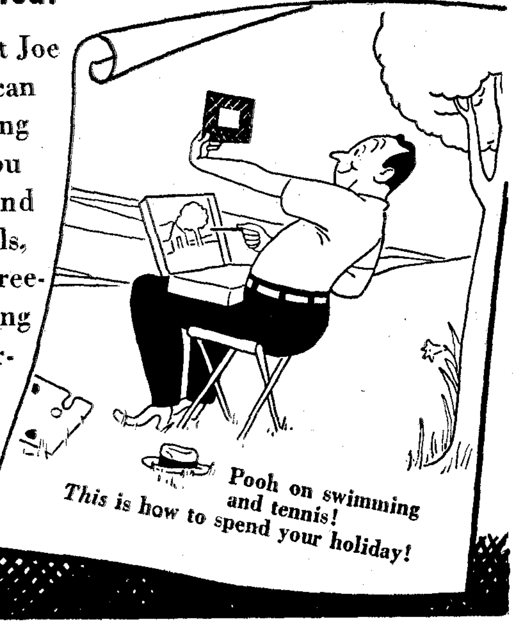
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books. It is not, for example, true that Dickens has "no friendly pictures . . . of naval men." In "Edwin Drood," one of the most admirable characters is precisely a naval man, Mr. Tartar. Nor is it true that "in his attitude toward servants Dickens is not ahead of his age" and created only comic servants. With his own family background of ladies' maids and butlers, he was able to see particularly clearly the breaking down of the feudal relationship between masters and servants in England, as he had presented it in Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller; and, in "Bleak House," he dramatized the graduation of the servant class into an independent middle class in the career of Mr. Rouncewell, the housekeeper's son, who becomes a successful manufacturer, compels Sir Leicester Dedlock to receive him as a gentleman, and runs against him in a Parliamentary election.

But all these essays are original and interesting. I read most of them when they first came out in magazines, and I have reread them here with pleasure. There will be more to say about George Orwell when his satire, "Animal Farm," which is now having a great success in England, is published over here in the autumn.

"PAST ALL DISHONOR," by James M. Cain (Knopf), is a shocker about the period of the Civil War, and it sounds as if it were a parody called "If James M. Cain Had Written a Civil War Novel." The theme is the familiar one, to readers of Cain, of the weak but attractive man, in this case a young Secessionist spy, misled into treachery and crime by an audacious and highly sexed woman, in this case a mining-town harlot. The two have a succession of violent adventures of the utmost implausibility, involving any amount of murder and mayhem, as well as fornication stepped up with brutality. The characters talk straight post-Hemingway, full of phrases unknown in 1861, with occasional ladlings-in of the language of "Huckleberry Finn" when the author remembers his period. I laughed more times in the wrong places than I usually do with Cain.

Yet I could not help feeling depressed as I rapidly flipped the last pages, in which the lovers derail a train in order to accomplish a robbery. I had liked James M. Cain's early novels, which have so much more surprise and point than most of this kind of fiction. I studied the blurb on the jacket. "Here is Cain at his peak," it said. Poor fellow, he is at his nadir. The worst is that he seems utterly unconscious of it. "Mr. Cain," the blurb says, "writes: 'I have tried to put real human beings before the reader. . . . Also, I have tried to present the life of the time as it was, and as few people seem to realize it was.' " He got the idea of writing the book, the blurb goes on to explain, "on a trip to Virginia City in connection with a picture," and most of what you find in this portrayal of "the life of the time" is a lot of old studio properties: guns, saloons, gambling wheels, Wells Fargo, silver bonanzas, galloping horses, the bad woman of magnificent insolence who keeps the boys shooting it out for her favors. It used to be said about Cain's earlier novels that they sounded like movie scripts too outrageous to be produced. But now the movies have caught up with Cain: "The Postman Always Rings Twice" has just been made into a film. And in the meantime, what has happened to the writer himself? In "Past All Dishonor," at any rate, he has been eaten alive by the movies. He gives us nothing but costumes and ridiculous "gags," and yet he manages to kid himself that these are "real human beings" and "the life of the time as it was."

—EDMUND WILSON

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

ROAD TO CALVARY, by Alexei Tolstoy (Knopf). An unconscionably long trilogy (885 pages), of which the first two parts are a revised version of "Darkness and Dawn," a novel already published in this country. As readers of that book may remember, it dealt mainly with the fortunes, from 1914 to 1919, of two sisters in a family of St. Petersburg intellectuals. Part III continues to follow the adventures of the sisters, and it also includes a lot of tedious detail about the fighting of the civil-war period. In spite of an inartistic ending, obviously added with one eye on the Kremlin, the book is a distinguished work in the large, leisurely tradition of the nineteenth-century Russian novelists.

BERNARD CLARE, by James T. Farrell (Vanguard). Critics have for years been urging a change of venue and characters upon Mr. Farrell. Now, here he is with a new hero, in entirely new surroundings. This most recent novel, however, has so many of the standard Farrell virtues and Farrell faults that it gives no indication that the author has really made a fresh start. Bernard Clare, a Chicagoan,

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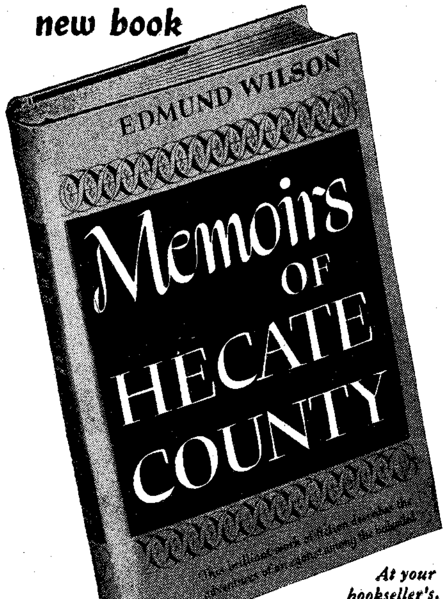

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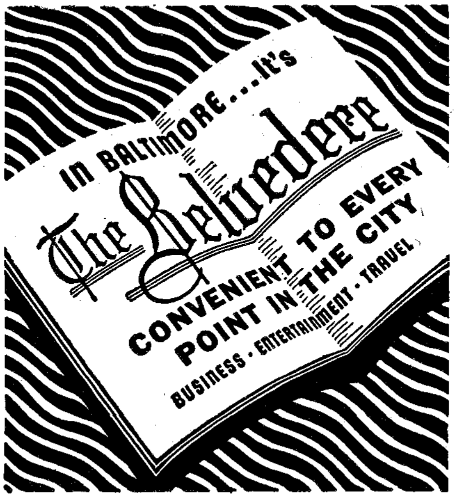
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comes to Greenwich Village in 1927 and makes his living at odd jobs while trying to become a writer. The novel covers only a few months, which may be why Bernard Clare does not appear to be as real a figure as Studs Lonigan or Danny O'Neill. If, however, the author continues to use him as a hero, which is not unlikely in view of Mr. Farrell's past economies in that line, Clare will doubtless come to be as solid and lifelike as his predecessors—a commentary, of course, on the author's use of reiteration for effect.

LAND, by Liam O'Flaherty (Random House). Mr. O'Flaherty's new novel, his first in nine years, is a story of the Irish uprising in the days of Parnell. It is filled with the sort of action that has become almost conventional in such novels—ambuscades, dynamitings, barn burnings, and so on—and the author, skilled at plot making, keeps things moving. Mr. O'Flaherty isn't a concise writer, but he writes well enough to give his readers (except those who are tired of the troubles of the Irish) an interesting, moving, and informative book. He even gives them a love story, too.

THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH, by C. S. Lewis (Macmillan). Another volume developing Mr. Lewis's theory that the Devil is devising increasingly ingenious temptations. After a down-to-earth beginning, the novel turns into something like a fairy tale. It is laid in an imaginary English university town; the Devil, disguised as a powerful research foundation, is Science operating in the name of progress but actually without humanitarian scruples. The victim is a stuffy junior fellow of the university who, dazzled by visions of scientific achievement, takes an active part in the struggle between old-fashioned humanists and progressive materialists. In his usual polished prose, the author creates an elaborate satiric picture of a war between morality and devilry to prove that mixing science and ethics is often disastrous.

FOR ONE SWEET GRAPE, by Kate O'Brien (Doubleday). A delicate invention centering on a curious romantic episode in sixteenth-century Spain, involving Philip II, his brilliant Minister of State, and the woman they both loved. Miss O'Brien has taken the strange superficial facts of the case and, without reconstructing a moment of history, has created a tragic study of three absorbing and

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very disparate personalities. An original and impressive work, reflecting the same lofty, thoughtful Catholicism that distinguished the author's "The Land of Spices."

A World to Win, by Upton Sinclair (Viking). The indefatigable Mr. Sinclair unrolls another section of the Lanny Budd series, whose plots bear an ever-increasing resemblance to the *Times* electric news sign. The current installment opens in 1940, with a conversation between Pétain and Lanny, and ends in 1942, with Lanny carrying a confidential message from President Roosevelt to Stalin. In the interim, the hero bounces energetically all over the world, saves Roosevelt from assassination, has a part in Hess's flight, gets into an accidental brush with French patriots, and (this was inevitable) takes a hand in the construction of the atomic bomb. If this endless series had not been so often and so solemnly declared important stuff, it would surely never be taken for anything more than a childish and, on the whole, amusing game which Mr. Sinclair delights in playing.

Aston Kings, by Humphrey Pakington (Norton). Mr. Pakington's elegant Tory humor, applied to upper-class English country life of fifty years ago, makes our domestic brand of nostalgic fiction seem very stodgy. The book is refreshment of the cream-puff variety and will inevitably be likened to Mrs. Thirkell's chronicles of county families. Mr. Pakington's pastry is, however, made by a more skillful hand, and its filling has a flavor that is decidedly not vanilla.

Note: "Third Avenue, New York," by John McNulty, has been published by Little, Brown. It is a collection of stories, all of them first published in *The New Yorker*, dealing entertainingly with life under the Third Avenue "L." The book is illustrated by Beatrice Tobias.

GENERAL

Horned Pigeon, by George Millar (Doubleday). In an earlier book called "Waiting in the Night," Captain Millar has told how he joined the Maquis in order to escape from some unexplained personal sorrow. Now he goes back to the early days of the war to explain what that sorrow was. Leaving his wife in London, he entered the British Army, was captured by Rommel's men in Egypt, spent the next three years in and out of Axis prisons, and eventually escaped to England. There, on his first night at home with his wife, he stumbled on the information that caused his anguish. If the dénouement is not altogether surprising, the book is, nevertheless, just as good as the author's first one, for it contains a sharp and thoughtful treatise on imprisonment in wartime and its effect on a man of feeling and intelligence.

The Wilson Era: Years of War and After, by Josephus Daniels (University of North Carolina Press). The fourth volume of Mr. Daniels' memoirs, a series that has been unfolding for some years and that is turning out to be not so much a life story as a significant dossier on our times. The latest volume covers the years the author served as Secretary of the Navy during the first World War, as well as his part in the Peace Conference and the "sea battle of Paris," and is, naturally, of special interest at the moment. Many illustrations.

The Doctor to the Dead, by John Bennett (Rinehart). A collection of tales from the South, set down by the author as they were told to him during the past fifty years by Charleston fishermen, washerwomen, and servants. These stories, macabre and always grotesque, are highly poetic and imaginative in an innocent sort of way; they have a variety and inventiveness not found in the Paul Bunyan kind of story, and they tell you something about the people who made them up.

The German Air Force, by Wing Commander Asher Lee (Harper). An interesting, non-technical study of the Luftwaffe from its origin to its collapse, by one of Britain's foremost experts on the subject. The author believes that Hitler and Göring eventually crippled the Luftwaffe by forcing its growth for use as a political weapon rather than a military one, and he thinks that an un-Nazified air force, if it had had the Luftwaffe's intelligent leadership and technical skill, might have succeeded in dominating the air. Illustrated.

The Black Book (Duell, Sloan & Pearce). This is the sharpest indictment yet drawn up against the Nazi persecutors of the Jews, compiled and thoroughly documented and annotated by a number of Jewish committees. There have been many black books since the beginning of the war; this is the blackest.

Talking Through My Hats, by

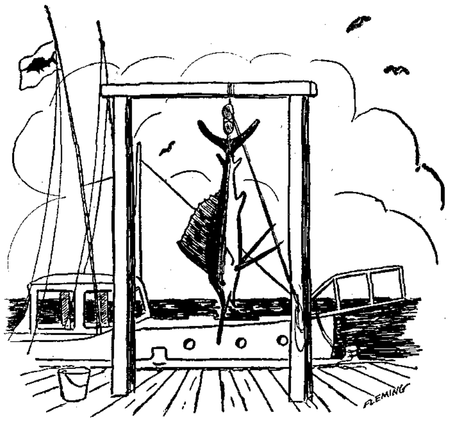
Lilly Daché (Coward-McCann). The title tells you a lot about what you can expect here. This story of Mme. Daché and her rise from immigrant girl to head of an enormous millinery business is all very glamorous and breathlessly mad, but it doesn't quite explain that big building on Fifty-sixth Street or the *x*-million-dollar corporation that is the House of Daché. The book might have been of more interest if it had not been written in a way that simply invites parody.

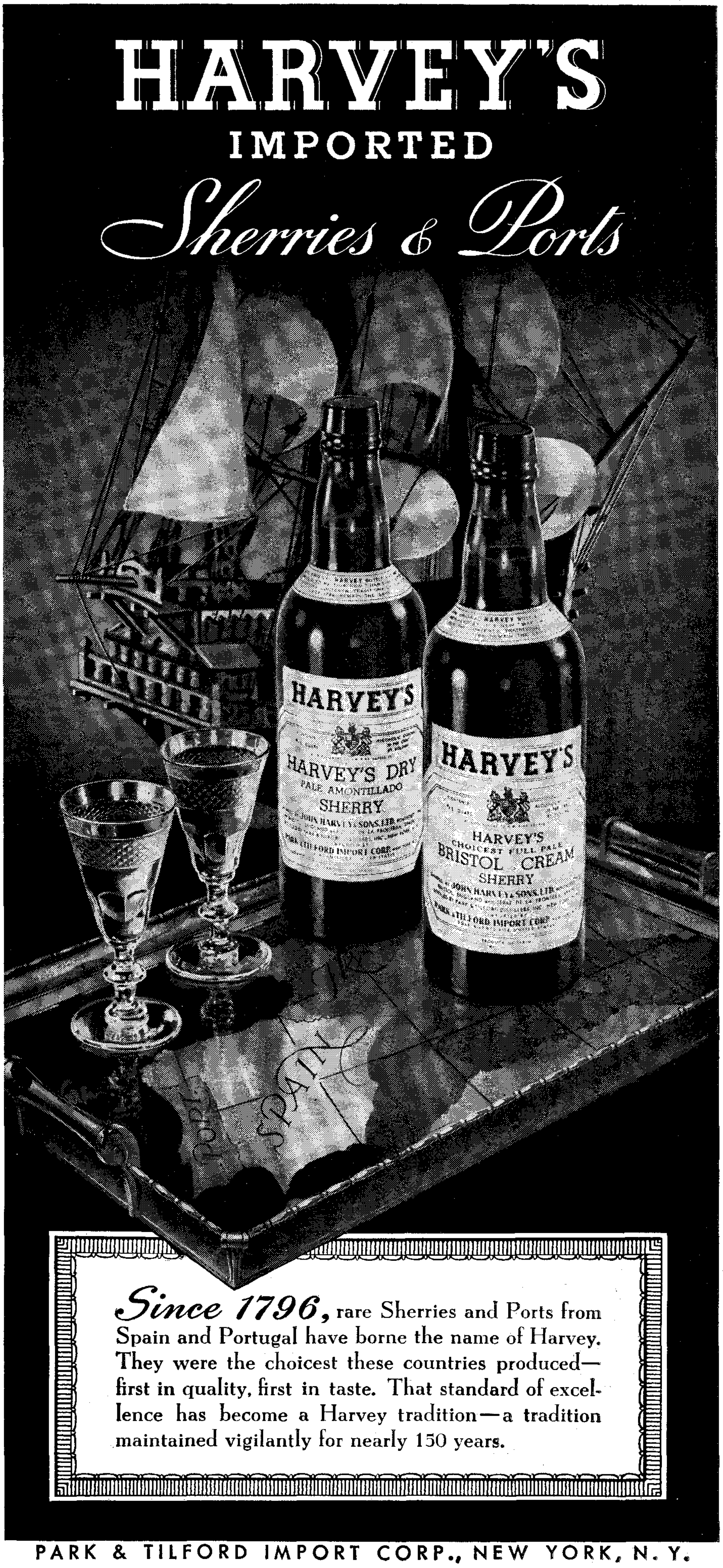
MYSTERY AND CRIME

PILGRIM'S REST, by Patricia Wentworth (Lippincott). Further work for Miss Silver, the leading British representative of the mousy school of detection. As usual, she goes to bat for a fairly foolish young lady, this time a Miss Judy Elliot, who, after taking a job as housemaid in the village of Holt St. Agnes, is troubled by the cadavers in her employer's wine cellar. Miss Silver's solution of the case may be more intricate than is necessary, but it will undoubtedly be satisfactory to her admirers.

CHEAT THE HANGMAN, by E. X. Ferrars (Doubleday). Murder and its talkative aftermath in literary circles in wartime London. Mrs. Alice Church, a practical, if unspectacular, lady, decides that the evidence that has convicted a female literary agent for the murder of a prominent playwright is unsound psychologically, and goes about the job of saving the woman's life, mostly through a series of heart-to-heart chats with her friends. The discovery she arrives at is very ingenious indeed and worthy of a less static plot. Nicely written, though.

HALO IN BLOOD, by John Evans (Bobbs-Merrill). Paul Pine, a private eye, patrols Chicago and its suburbs on behalf of a Mr. Sand-

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mark, whose attractive stepdaughter, Leona, has got herself tangled up with some very undesirable types. Pine is, of course, slugged, shot at, and Mickey-Finned, but he surmounts these occupational hazards and at last offers a reasonably clear idea of who murdered whom, and why. As good as most mysteries involving the brass-knuckles set.

The Deadly Percheron, by John Franklin Bardin (Dodd, Mead). A young man consults a psychiatrist about what he says are some leprechauns who are paying him to hand out money on the streets of New York. The psychiatrist undertakes an investigation of the leprechauns, gets hit on the head, and wakes up some months later with a new personality. That's only the beginning of this curious psychiatric item, but it ought to give you an idea of what to expect. A perplexing book on several counts.

Bitter Ending, by Alexander Irving (Dodd, Mead). A glimpse of what goes on behind the impressive façade of the medical profession when some of its practitioners get mixed up in a murder. Young Dr. Post, assistant in the dissection laboratory in a large medical school, helps the police investigate the death of a lecherous old party who heads the school's surgical department. Dr. Post, whose bedside manner may well have been influenced by the demeanor of Sam Spade, interrogates a number of handsome young ladies and works out a solution that is technically very neat.

•

FUNNY COINCIDENCE DEPARTMENT

One of the military men testifying before the Senate Committee on Atomic Energy estimated that three atomic bombs would destroy Washington, whereas it would take eight to demolish New York. Here, we suspect, is the beginning of an almost inevitable development—the atomic bomb as a unit of measurement, like horsepower. First it will be cities: a five-bomb town (Los Angeles) and a one-bomb burg (Binghamton).—*The New Yorker, March 16, 1946.*

One of the military officers testifying before the Senate Committee on Atomic Energy estimated that three atomic bombs would destroy Washington, whereas it would take eight to reduce New York City to a smouldering rubble. From a military standpoint, apparently hereafter cities will likely be rated according to their vulnerability to an atomic bomb. For instance, a city like Los Angeles would be classed as a five-bomb town, whereas Erie would be rated as a "one bomb burg." —*Jay James in the Erie (Pa.) Times, March 26, 1946.*

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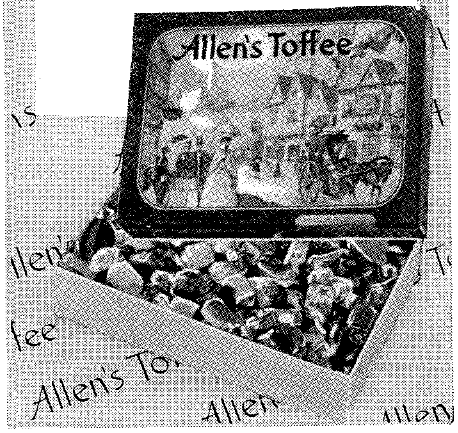

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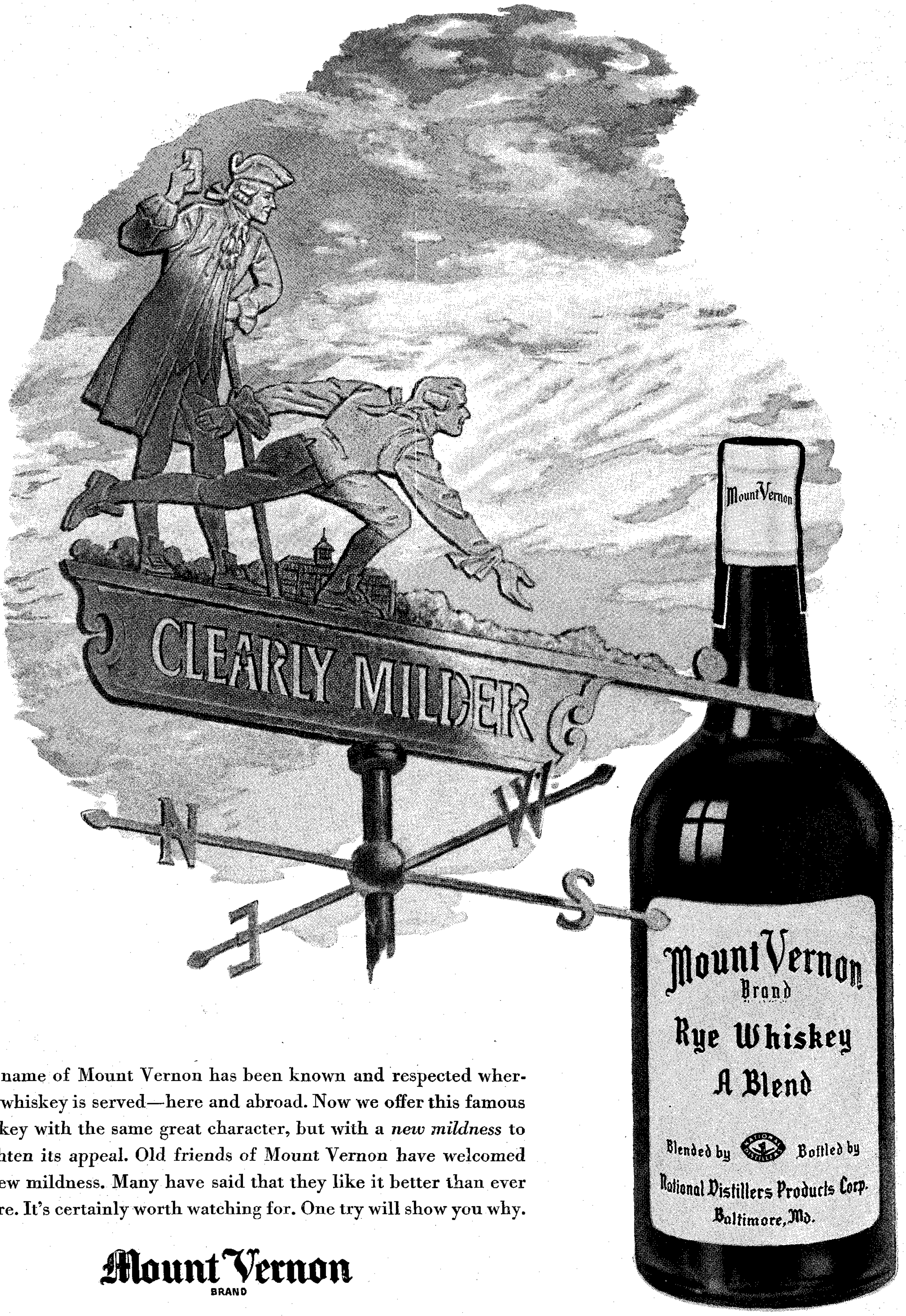
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